

Kailua Christian Church
Sunday January 29, 2023
Galatians 1 – Challenging a Different Gospel
Galatians 1:1-24
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Galatians 1 – Challenging a Different Gospel

A. Introduction to the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians.

1. (1-2) The writer and the readers.

Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia.

a. **Paul:** The apostolic authorship of this magnificent letter is virtually unquestioned, even by more skeptical scholars.

i. Galatians has been called the "Declaration of Independence of Christian liberty." The great reformer Martin Luther especially loved this letter; he called Galatians his "Catherine von Bora" after his wife; because, he said, "I am married to it." Leon Morris wrote, "Galatians is a passionate letter, the outpouring of the soul of a preacher on fire for his Lord and deeply committed to bringing his hearers to an understanding of what saving faith is."

ii. Many scholars believe that Galatians was written in the late 40's or the early 50's. An approximate date of A.D. 50 is often given. It seems that Paul wrote this letter before the Jerusalem Council mentioned in [Acts 15](#), because although he mentions several trips to Jerusalem, he makes no mention of the council. Because the Jerusalem Council of [Acts 15](#) dealt with the exact issues Paul writes about, it would seem strange if the Council had already happened, yet he made no mention of it. If it is true that Galatians was written around A.D. 50, then Paul would have been a Christian for about 15 years, being converted on the road to Damascus around A.D. 35.

b. **Paul, an apostle:** This emphasis on Paul's apostolic credentials is important. Paul had strong words for these Galatians, and they had to understand that he wrote with authority; indeed, *apostolic* authority. Paul expected that Christians would respect his authority as **an apostle** of Jesus Christ.

i. “The word *apostle* as Paul uses it here does not merely refer to one who has a message to announce, but to an appointed representative with an official status who is provided with the credentials of his office.” (Wuest)

ii. It is our duty to also respect Paul’s authority as an apostle. We do this by regarding this ancient letter as the Word of God, and by taking it seriously to heart.

c. **Not from men or through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father:** Paul’s calling as an apostle was not **from** man, nor was it **through** man. It didn’t *originate* with man, and it didn’t *come through* man. It originated with God and came directly from God. His standing as an apostle was not based on opinion polls and it did not come from any human council. It was based on a Divine call, made through both the Father and the Son.

i. “The bluntness of Paul’s denial is due to the charge... that Paul was not a genuine apostle because not one of the twelve.” (Robertson)

ii. “When I was a young man I thought Paul was making too much of his call. I did not understand his purpose. I did not then realize the importance of the ministry... We exalt our calling, not to gain glory among men, or money, or satisfaction, or favor, but because people need to be assured that the words we speak are the words of God. This is no sinful pride. It is holy pride.” (Martin Luther)

d. **And all the brethren who are with me:** Paul gave a greeting from **all the brethren who are with him**; but the use of *I* in this letter (such as in [Galatians 1:6](#)) shows that it was not really a “team effort” written by Paul and his coworkers. Paul wrote this letter and he sent greetings from his friends as a matter of courtesy.

e. **To the churches of Galatia:** This wasn’t written to a *single* church in a *single* city. For example, 1 Thessalonians is addressed to *the church of the Thessalonians* ([1 Thessalonians 1:1](#)). But this was addressed to **the churches of Galatia**, because **Galatia** was a *region*, not a *city* and there were several **churches** among the cities of **Galatia**.

i. “During the third century BC some Celtic peoples (or Gauls) migrated to this area and, after fighting with the people they encountered, they settled into the northern part of Asia Minor. In due course they came into conflict with the Romans, who defeated them, and from this time they remained under the authority of the Romans as a dependent kingdom. The name ‘Galatia’ covered the territory settled by the Gauls.” (Morris)

ii. There were essentially two regions of **Galatia**, one to the north (including the cities of Pessinus, Ancyra and Tavium) and one to the south (including the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe). There has been considerable – though mostly unimportant – debate as to if Galatians was written to the cities of the northern region or the southern region.

iii. “It is clear that Paul intended his words to have a wide circulation in the region of Galatia. The letter would be taken to each centre and read there, or several copies would be made and one taken to each church.” (Morris)

f. **Of Galatia:** Paul was in southern Galatia on his first missionary journey ([Acts 13:13-14:23](#)) and he went through northern Galatia on his second ([Acts 16:6](#)) and third ([Acts 18:23](#)) missionary journeys.

i. In the end it doesn't really matter if the letter was written to the northern or southern regions of Galatia. We may not be able to know and it doesn't really matter, because this is a letter that has something to say to *every Christian*. The debate between northern Galatia and southern Galatia is interesting for scholars and adds *some* understanding to the letter, but not much.

2. (3-5) Paul sends his apostolic greeting.

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 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, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

a. **Grace to you and peace:** This was Paul's familiar greeting, drawing from the traditional greetings in both Greek culture (**grace**) and Jewish culture (**peace**). Paul used this exact phrase five other times in the New Testament.

i. Paul used the word **grace** more than 100 times in his writings. Among all the other writers of the New Testament, it is only used 55 times. Paul was truly the apostle of **grace**.

ii. “These two terms, grace and peace, constitute Christianity.” (Martin Luther)

b. **Who gave Himself for our sins:** Paul wished **grace** and **peace** unto his readers from both God the Father and God the Son. Now, Paul will briefly expand on the work of God the Son, **our Lord Jesus Christ**. The first thing he wrote about Jesus is that He **gave Himself for our sins**.

i. “Throughout the epistle Paul points the Galatians to the centrality of the cross. He cannot wait to make this plain, and we find a reference to it in his very first sentence.” (Morris)

ii. Jesus **gave**. We know from [John 3:16](#) that God the Father so loved the world that *He gave His only begotten Son*. Yet God the Father was not the only giver; Jesus also **gave**. Jesus is a loving, giving God and a loving, giving Savior.

iii. Jesus gave the greatest thing anyone can give – **Himself**. One might debate if it was more a gift for the Father to give the Son (as in [John 3:16](#)) or if it was more of a gift for the Son to give **Himself**. But that is like discussing how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Jesus gave the greatest gift *He* could; He gave **himself**. There is a sense in which we do not even begin to give until we give *ourselves*.

iv. Jesus gave Himself **for our sins**. This is why Jesus *had* to give Himself. **Our sins** put us on a road to ruin and destruction. If God did not do something to save us, **our sins** would destroy us. So out of love, Jesus **gave Himself for our sins!** The love was always there; but there would never have been the need for Jesus to give Himself if our sins had not placed us in a terrible place.

v. “These words, ‘who gave himself for our sins’, are very important. He wanted to tell the Galatians straight out that atonement for sins and perfect righteousness are not to be sought anywhere but in Christ... So glorious is this redemption that it should ravish us with wonder.” (Calvin)

c. **That He might deliver us from this present evil age:** This explains *why* Jesus gave Himself for our sins. In many ways, the Galatians battled with and sometimes lost against **this present evil age**. They needed to know that Jesus had come to save them **from this present evil age**.

i. The idea behind the word **deliver** is not deliverance from the *presence* of something, but deliverance from the *power* of something. We will not be delivered from the *presence* of **this present evil age** until we go to be with Jesus. But we can experience deliverance from the *power* of **this present evil age** right now.

d. **According to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever:** The purpose of this saving work is not primarily to benefit man (though that is part of the purpose). Instead, the primary purpose is to glorify God the Father.

i. False doctrine was a real problem among the Galatian churches, and their false doctrines robbed God of some of the glory due to Him. By emphasizing the rightly recognized glory of God and His plan, Paul hoped to put them on the right path.

B. The danger of a different gospel.

1. (6) Paul's amazement.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.

a. **I marvel that you are turning away so soon:** Paul seemed amazed not so much that they were **turning away** (this might *alarm* him, but not *amaze* him), but that they were **turning away so soon**.

i. Missing here are the expressions of thanks or praise that Paul often wrote in the beginning of his letters. [Romans 1:8-15](#), [1 Corinthians 1:4-9](#), [Philippians 1:3-11](#), [Colossians 1:3-8](#), and [1 Thessalonians 1:2-10](#) are each examples of Paul giving thanks and praising the churches in his opening words. But he did not do this with the Galatians and the directness of his approach indicates the severity of their problem.

ii. "This is the sole instance where St. Paul omits to express his thanksgiving in addressing any church." (Lightfoot)

b. **From Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel:** They were turning *away* from a Person (**from Him who called you**) as they turned *to* a false idea (**to a different gospel**). To turn away from the true gospel is always to turn away from the Person of Jesus Christ.

i. **From Him who called you in the grace of Christ** also connected their turning away to a turning away from the principle of **grace**. However the Galatians were **turning**, it was *away* from the grace of God, not *towards* it.

2. (7) Three facts about this different gospel brought to the Galatians.

Which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

a. **Which is:** [Galatians 1:7](#) tells three things about this different gospel. First, it was an *illegitimate* gospel (**which is not another**). Second, it was not good at all but *trouble* (**who trouble you**). Third, it was a *distortion* of the true gospel (**pervert the gospel of Christ**).

b. **Which is not another:** Paul recognized that this *different gospel* was not really **another** gospel at all. Those who promoted this *different gospel* perhaps said, “We know our message is different than Paul’s message. He has his truth, and we have ours. He has his gospel, and we have ours.” Paul rejected the idea that their message was a legitimate alternative gospel in any way.

i. The word **gospel** literally means “good news.” Paul meant, “There is no ‘good news’ in this message. It is only bad news, so it really isn’t a ‘different good news.’ It is bad news. This is not **another** gospel at all.”

ii. The King James Version translates this passage like this: *unto another gospel: Which is not another*. Actually, the New King James Version translation is much better at this place, because it makes a distinction between *different* and **another**, accurately reflecting the difference between two distinct ancient Greek words used. *Different* has the idea of “another of different kind” and *another* has the idea of “another of the same kind.” It is as if Paul wrote, “They brought you a completely different gospel. They claim it is just an alternative gospel of the same kind, but it isn’t at all. It is all together different.”

c. **There are some who trouble you:** Those who brought this other gospel to the Galatians brought them **trouble**. They didn’t advertise their message as **trouble**, but that is what it was.

i. **Some who trouble you** means that *someone brought this false gospel to the Galatians*. False gospels don’t just happen. People bring them, and the people who bring them may be sincere and have a lot of charisma.

ii. “Note the resourcefulness of the devil. Heretics do not advertise their errors. Murderers, adulterers, thieves disguise themselves. So the devil masquerades all these devices and activities. He puts on white to make himself look like an angel of light.” (Martin Luther)

d. **To pervert the gospel of Christ:** The other gospel was really a *perversion* or a *distortion* of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. It didn’t start from nothing and make up a new name for God and pretending to have a new Savior. It used the names and ideas familiar to the Galatian Christians, but it slightly twisted the ideas to make their message all the more deceptive.

i. **The gospel of Christ:** Notice that Paul was really not contending for the gospel of *Paul*, though it was his gospel also. Paul’s gospel was only worth defending and fighting for because it was in fact **the gospel of Christ** Jesus.

e. **Want to pervert the gospel of Christ:** Paul plainly wrote that these people **want to** distort the good news of Jesus. It is sometimes hard for us to understand why someone would **want to pervert the gospel of Christ**.

i. There is something about the message of the true gospel that is deeply offensive to human nature. To understand this, we should first understand what the true gospel is. Paul stated his gospel most succinctly in [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#). The message of the gospel is what Jesus did on the cross for us as revealed by the Scriptures and proven by the resurrection.

ii. When we understand how offensive the true gospel is to human nature, we better understand why someone would want to **pervert** it.

- The gospel offends our *pride*. It tells us we need a savior, and that we cannot save ourselves. It gives no credit to us at all for our salvation; it is all the work of Jesus for us.

- The gospel offends our *wisdom*. It saves us by something many consider foolish – God becoming man and dying a humiliating, disgraceful death on our behalf.

- Third, the gospel offends our *knowledge*. It tells us to believe something which goes against scientific knowledge and personal experience – that a dead man, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead in a glorious new body that would never die again.

3. (8-9) A solemn curse upon those who bring a false gospel.

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. 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.

a. **But even if we, or an angel from heaven:** Paul didn't care who brought the false gospel. Even if it were himself, or **an angel from heaven**, it was to be rejected. Any person who spreads a false gospel was worthy only of a particular curse from God (**let him be accursed**).

b. **Let him be accursed:** Paul seemed to have in his mind the solemn curses pronounced by God upon those who break His covenant ([Deuteronomy 27](#)). For Paul, it wasn't enough to say, "Don't listen to these people." Paul soberly thought that they should be *curse*d.

c. **So now I say again:** The curse was repeated for extra emphasis; it is really impossible for Paul to express this idea with any more strength than he did here.

i. It might be fair to ask, “Where was Paul’s love?” He asked for a “double curse” on people – people who spread a false gospel. He didn’t just ask God to curse the message, but to curse the people who spread the message. So, where was Paul’s love? Paul’s love was for souls that were in danger of hell. If a gospel is false, and not “another good news” at all, then it can not save the lost. Paul looked at this false, perverted gospel and said, “That is a rescue ship about to sink! It can’t save anyone! I want to do everything right before God to warn people away from the wrong rescue ship.”

C. The Divine source of the gospel Paul preached.

1. (10) Paul’s gospel did not come from a desire to please man.

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.

a. **For do I now persuade men, or God?** Paul’s idea was *not* “I want to persuade God to my point of view.” The idea is that God was his *audience*. When Paul spoke, he spoke first to *God* and not to man.

b. **Or do I seek to please men?** Paul’s first obligation was to *please God* and not to **please men**. He refused to shape his message just to please his audience. He was more concerned about pleasing God.

i. Though it is not specifically said, we sense that Paul made a contrast between himself and those who brought the *different gospel*. Apparently in some way that *different gospel* was built around the idea of pleasing man.

ii. “There have always been preachers who have sought popular acclaim above all else, and there are some still. It is part of fallen human nature that even those charged with the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel can fall into the trap of trying to be popular rather than faithful.” (Morris)

c. **For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ:** For Paul it was one or the other. He could not direct his ministry towards pleasing men *and at the same time* direct it towards pleasing Jesus Christ. And if his concern was not first to please Jesus Christ, then he was not a **bondservant of Christ**.

i. **Servant** is perhaps not the best translation here; it may be better translated *slave*. “It is unfortunate that... our English translations should so

consistently fail to give this word its true meaning, thereby encouraging the false conception of Christian ‘service’ (as something essentially voluntary and part-time) so characteristic of modern religious idealism. The ‘bond-servant of Christ’ is not free to offer or withhold his ‘service’; his life is not his own, but belongs entirely to his Lord.” (Duncan, cited in Morris)

2. (11-12) The Divine source of Paul’s gospel.

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

a. **The gospel which was preached by me:** “Paul makes a play on words when he refers to ‘the gospel that I gossiped to you.’” (Morris)

b. **Is not according to man:** In contrast to the different gospel brought by others, Paul’s message was a revelation from God. Paul’s message was not a man’s attempt to reach up and understand God; it was God’s effort to bow down and communicate with man.

i. Men may have many marvelous things to teach us, but God’s revelation has *all things which pertain to life and godliness* ([2 Peter 1:3](#)). Now more than ever, the world does not need the good advice and wisdom of man, it needs a revelation from God.

c. **I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ:** Paul’s own relationship to this gospel was unique. Most everyone hears the gospel from someone else; this is God’s most common way of communicating the gospel ([Romans 10:14-15](#)). But Paul was not normal in this respect. He received the gospel in a dramatic, direct **revelation** when He encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus.

i. [Acts 9:1-9](#) describes this remarkable incident: The Lord Jesus spoke to Paul directly on the Road to Damascus, and then Paul spent three days without sight, before a Christian named Ananias came to him. It was probably during this time – either on the road or during the three days – when Jesus brought His gospel to Paul. Paul certainly had the gospel right away, because he was both saved and began to immediately preach the message Jesus gave him ([Acts 9:20-22](#)).

ii. “Paul did not receive instruction from Ananias. Paul had already been called, enlightened, and taught by Christ in the road. His contact with Ananias was merely a testimonial to the fact that Paul had been called by Christ to preach the gospel.” (Luther)

3. (13-24) Paul proves that his message did not come from man.

For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." And they glorified God in me.

a. **For you have heard:** It seemed that *everyone* had heard how Paul came to the Lord. Paul's story was familiar to Christians in general and especially to those he had personally ministered to. We can trust that if Paul was among a group of people for a while and preached the gospel to them, it wouldn't be long until he shared his personal testimony.

i. The value of a personal testimony is not restricted to those who have a dramatic conversion story like Paul did. We can see the glory of God's work just as much in those who think they have a boring testimony.

b. **My former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it:** Paul's credentials as a zealous Jew who persecuted Christians are beyond doubt. [Acts 8:1-3](#) and [9:1-2](#) describe Paul's energetic persecution of Christians.

i. This shows that Paul was not looking for some other truth when he was first confronted with the gospel of Jesus. Unfortunately, many of those who seek a new revelation will find it – and find deception that draws them away from Jesus Christ (like a young Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church).

c. **But when it pleased God:** Paul did not come to Jesus because any *man* decided that he should. It wasn't at the pleasure of any *man*, but **when it pleased God**. Additionally, God did not choose Paul because there was

something in Paul that pleased him; God **called Paul through His grace**, God's unmerited favor.

i. We know this call wasn't because of anything Paul did because he said that he was called **from my mother's womb**. Therefore, God called Paul *before* Paul did anything to deserve it.

ii. Before Paul was a Christian, the emphasis was on what *he* had done: **I persecuted... I advanced... (I was) more exceedingly zealous**. Once Paul followed Jesus Christ the emphasis was on what *God* had done: **God, who separated me... called me... reveal His Son in me**.

iii. "He wanted to show that his calling depended on the secret election of God, and that he was ordained an apostle, not because he had fitted himself for undertaking such an office by his own industry or because God had discerned that he was worthy of having it bestowed on him, but because, before he was born, he had been set apart by the secret purpose of God." (Calvin)

d. **Separated**: This was an important word. The ancient Greek word *aphorizo* is related to the word used as a title for the religious elite in Paul's day, the "separated ones" known as the *Pharisees*. Before Paul came to Jesus he was an important Pharisee ([Philippians 3:5](#)), but he wasn't *really* separated to God. Now through the work of Jesus he was really **separated** to God.

i. "The word is akin to that for 'Pharisee', and the Pharisees were in no doubt about it: they held firmly that they were 'separated' to God." (Morris)

e. **To reveal His Son in me**: In [Galatians 1:12](#), Paul wrote of how Jesus was revealed *to* him (*the revelation of Jesus Christ*). But here is something different and perhaps more glorious: Jesus revealed **in** Paul. God wants to do more than reveal Jesus **to** us; He wants to reveal Jesus **in** us.

i. "What begins by being a revelation of Christ to Paul becomes a revelation of Christ in Paul as the Spirit produces his fruits in unaccustomed soil." (Cole, cited in Morris)

f. **That I might preach Him among the Gentiles**: This shows that God has a sense of humor. He selected a man before he was born for the job of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. That man grew up *hating* Gentiles, probably believing as some (not all) other Jewish people did in his day: that the only reason God made Gentiles was so they would fuel the fires of hell.

g. **I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood**: Additionally, upon his conversion, Paul did not immediately **confer with flesh and blood** (even the

eminent apostles in **Jerusalem**) to discover the content of the gospel. He didn't need to, because the gospel was revealed directly to him by Jesus.

i. We shouldn't think that Paul meant here that it was wrong to hear of the gospel through others, or that those who do hear it from someone who isn't an apostle somehow have an inferior salvation. The point is simply that the gospel Paul preached was not a gospel of *man*, and this was settled forever because he did not *receive* it from any man.

h. **But I went to Arabia:** Paul did not travel to what we would call Saudi Arabia. The area known in that day as **Arabia** in his day extended all the way to the city of Damascus. Paul probably lived in some quiet desert place outside of Damascus.

i. **Then after three years:** Paul proved here that he did not learn the gospel from the apostles, because he had been a Christian for three years before he even met the apostles Peter and James.

i. It was unusual for him to wait so long. "A new convert, especially one who had been foremost in persecuting the believers, would surely touch base with the leaders of the movement he was now espousing, if only to make sure that he now had a correct understanding of what the Christian movement was teaching. But Paul did not do this." (Morris)

ii. Nor was Paul commanded to appear before the apostles in some kind of examination. This is indicated when Paul wrote, "**to see Peter.**" The word translated **to see** speaks of someone coming as a tourist. "A word used," says Chrysostom, 'by those who go to see great and famous cities.'" (Lightfoot) The idea is that Paul was *not* commanded to come to Jerusalem to give an account to Peter or the other disciples, but he came of his own accord and visited as a tourist.

j. **They were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy."** If Paul did not learn the essential content of the gospel from any man, then it was also true that the early Christians were slow in learning just who Paul was in Jesus. All they really knew was that he had been dramatically converted – for which **they glorified God**. After his conversion, Paul was an anonymous Christian for many years.

i. Paul's status as *unknown* is certainly different from our own habit of puffing up any prominent convert as soon as they come to Jesus. Paul was happy and well served to spend many years in obscurity before God raised him up.

ii. In this whole section, Paul showed that there was *enough* contact between him and the other apostles to show that they were in perfect agreement, but *not so much* that it showed that Paul got his gospel from them instead of God.

iii. Paul's whole point in the second part of this chapter is important. His gospel was true, and his experience was valid, because it *really came from God*. It is fair for every Christian to ask if their gospel has come from God, or if they have made it up themselves. The questions are important because only what comes from God can really save us and make a lasting difference in our lives.

Scripture Verses: Galatians 1:1-24

Galatians 1

New International Version

¹ Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— ²and all the brothers and sisters[☺] with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! ⁹As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

¹⁰Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

¹¹ I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

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. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵ But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. ¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas[☐] and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

²¹ Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²² I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they praised God because of me.