



3. Call to Apostleship

Who is Paul? That I should pay attention to what he says? What gives him the authority to tell me what I should do? These are questions the churches of Galatians were asking about the man who first delivered to them the Gospel. Paul in Acts 13-14 first delivered the Gospel to southern Galatia establishing the churches there. Later the Judaizers, Jews who believed in Jesus but taught you must follow the Law of Moses to be saved, rejected the "Gospel" of Paul. The Judaizers attacked Paul's authority.

Was Paul one of the twelve? Did he get his authority from those who were with Jesus, if he was not there, why should they believe him? Here Paul asserts his authority, and presents his credentials. He shows his authority comes from Jesus alone, not from the other disciples. So the message he delivered was from the Lord and not from men, to reject his message was to reject Jesus' message not Paul's.

Gal 1:11-24

(10) For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were

still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- (11) For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.
- (12) For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- (13) For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.
- (14) 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.
- (15) But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,
- (16) 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;
- (17) 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.
- (18) Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.
- (19) But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.
- (20) (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)
- (21) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- (22) And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.



-(23) They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

(24) And they glorified God because of me.

(11) Paul's authority is being questioned, Paul teaches that faith in Jesus Christ alone is enough for salvation, yet others from Jerusalem teach you must follow the Law of Moses to be saved. (Acts 15:1). Paul responds,

brothers: Paul is not rejecting their salvation, he is calling them brothers, he wants them to understand the message of the Gospel he preached to them was not his message. Jesus is the one who gave him the Gospel it was not his own invention.

The gospel that was preached by me: When Paul first arrived in the area of Galatia he founded these churches based on the "Good News" (Gospel) of Jesus Christ. That Jesus died on the cross for their sins, and faith in Christ was all that was required for salvation. This the same Gospel presented by Jesus Himself. Jesus responding to the people of Galilee, told them the only work required of them was to believe.

Joh 6:27-29

(27) Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

(28) Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"

(29) Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

Joh 3:15-18

(15) that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

(16) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

(17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

(18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Not man's gospel: There is only one "Good News", only one Gospel. There is only one way to Heaven, through the work of Jesus Christ. Many people present their false messages, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Mohammad of Islam, Charles Taz Russell of the Jehovah Witnesses, etc, These are all man's gospels.

(12) **I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ:** Paul's authority was in question, Paul was not one of the twelve, so where did he get his authority. Here Paul begins to explain, the source of his authority was directly from Jesus Christ. He received "Revelation" directly from Jesus.

1. Paul first meets Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8).

Paul is blinded by the encounter and is led into Damascus.

2. In Damascus, Ananais is told to go and meet with Paul, and pray for him. (Acts 9:9-19)

3. He stayed and was strengthened by the brethren in Damascus (Acts 9:19)..

4. Paul went into the desert of Arabia for some time and then

returns to Damascus. (Galatians 1:17)

5. He then began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:20-22)

6. The Jews plotted to kill Paul, who escaped the city in a basket, being let down from the wall. (Acts 9:23-25)
7. Three years after his conversion, Paul goes to Jerusalem to meet the apostles (Galatians 1:18)

In the wilderness of the Arabian Desert, Paul conferred and learned from Jesus before returning to Damascus to preach the Gospel to the Jews of Damascus.

Act 9:1-31

- (1) But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
- (2) 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.
- (3) Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.
- (4) And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?**"
- (5) And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.**"
- (6) **But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."**
- (7) The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.
- (8) Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.
- (9) And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.
- (10) Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "**Ananias.**" And he said, "Here I am, Lord."
- (11) And the Lord said to him, "**Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,**
- (12) **and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."**
- (13) But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem.
- (14) And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name."
- (15) But the Lord said to him, "**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.**
- (16) **For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."**
- (17) So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
- (18) And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;
- (19) and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.
- (20) And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."
- (21) And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?"
- (22) But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.
- (23) When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him,
- (24) but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him,
- (25) but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.
- (26) And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.
- (27) But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.
- (28) So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.
- (29) And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.
- (30) And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.
- (31) So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

- (13) For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

heard — even before I came among you.



conversation — “my former way of life.”

Jews’ religion — The term, “*Hebrew*,” expresses the language; “Jew,” the *nationality*, as distinguished from the Gentiles; “Israelite,” the highest title, the religious privileges, as a member of the theocracy.

the church — Here singular, marking its unity, though constituted of many particular churches, under the one Head, Christ.

of God — added to mark the greatness of his sinful alienation from God ([1Co 15:19](#)).

wasted — laid it waste: the opposite of “building it up.”

(14) 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.

profited — *Greek*, “I was becoming a proficient”; “I made progress.”

above — beyond.

my equals — *Greek*, “Of mine own age, among my countrymen.”

traditions of my fathers — namely, those of the Pharisees, Paul being “a Pharisee, and son of a Pharisee” ([Act 23:6](#); [Act 26:5](#)). “MY fathers,” shows that it is not to be understood generally of the traditions of the nation.

(15) But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,

separated — “set me apart”: in the purposes of His electing love (compare [Act 9:15](#); [Act 22:14](#)), in order to show in me His “*pleasure*,” which is the farthest point that any can reach in inquiring the causes of his salvation. The actual “separating” or “setting apart” to the work marked out for him, is mentioned in [Act 13:2](#); [Rom 1:1](#). There is an allusion, perhaps, in the way of contrast, to the derivation of Pharisee from *Hebrew*, “pharash,” “separated.” I was once a so-called Pharisee or *Separatist*, but God had *separated* me to something far better.

from ... womb — Thus merit in me was out of the question, in assigning causes for His call from [Act 9:11](#). Grace is the sole cause ([Psa 22:9](#); [Psa 71:6](#); [Isa 49:1](#), [Isa 49:5](#); [Jer 1:5](#); [Luk 1:15](#)).

called me — on the way to Damascus ([Act 9:3-8](#)).

(16) 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;

reveal his Son in me — within me, in my inmost soul, by the Holy Spirit ([Gal 2:20](#)). Compare [2Co 4:6](#), “shined in our hearts.” The revealing of His Son by me to the Gentiles (so translate for “heathen”) was impossible, unless He had first revealed His Son *in me*; at first on my conversion, but especially at the subsequent revelation from Jesus Christ ([Gal 1:12](#)), whereby I learned the Gospel’s independence of the Mosaic law.

that I might preach — the present in the *Greek*, which includes the idea “that I *may* preach Him,” implying an office still *continuing*. This was the main commission entrusted to him ([Gal 2:7](#), [Gal 2:9](#)).



immediately — connected chiefly with “I went into Arabia” ([Gal 1:17](#)). It denotes the sudden fitness of the apostle. So [Act 9:20](#), “*Straightway* he preached Christ in the synagogue.”

I conferred not — *Greek*, “I had not further (namely, in addition to revelation) recourse to ... for the purpose of consulting.” The divine revelation was sufficient for me [Bengel].

flesh and blood — ([Mat 16:17](#)).

(17) 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.

went I up — Some of the oldest manuscripts read, “went away.”

to Jerusalem — the seat of the apostles.

into Arabia — This journey (not recorded in Acts) was during the whole period of his stay at Damascus, called by Luke ([Act 9:23](#)), “many [*Greek*, a considerable number of] days.” It is curiously confirmatory of the legitimacy of taking “many days” to stand for “three years,” that the same phrase exactly occurs in the same sense in [1Ki 2:38](#), [1Ki 2:39](#). This was a country of the *Gentiles*; here doubtless he preached as he did before and after ([Act 9:20](#), [Act 9:22](#)) at Damascus: thus he shows the independence of his apostolic commission. He also here had that comparative retirement

needed, after the first fervor of his conversion, to prepare him for the great work before him. Compare Moses ([Act 7:29](#), [Act 7:30](#)). His familiarity with the scene of the giving of the law, and the meditations and revelations which he had there, appear in [Gal 4:24](#), [Gal 4:25](#); [Heb 12:18](#). See on [Gal 1:12](#). The Lord from heaven communed with him, as He on earth in the days of His flesh communed with the other apostles.

returned — *Greek* “returned back again.”



[Gal 1:18](#) Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.

after three years — dating from my conversion, as appears by the contrast to “immediately” ([Gal 1:16](#)). This is the same visit to Jerusalem as in [Act 9:26](#), and at this visit occurred the vision ([Act 22:17](#), [Act 22:18](#)). The incident which led to his leaving Damascus ([Act 9:25](#); [2Co 11:33](#)) was not the main *cause* of his going to *Jerusalem*. So that there is no discrepancy in the statement here that he went “to see Peter”; or rather, as *Greek*, “to make the acquaintance of”; “to become personally acquainted with.” The two oldest manuscripts read, “Cephas,” the name given Peter elsewhere in the Epistle, the *Hebrew* name; as *Peter* is the *Greek* ([Joh 1:42](#)). Appropriate to the view of him here as the apostle especially of the Hebrews. It is remarkable that Peter himself, in his Epistles, uses the *Greek* name *Peter*, perhaps to mark his antagonism to the Judaizers who would cling to the Hebraic form. He was prominent among the apostles, though James, as bishop of Jerusalem, had the chief authority there ([Mat 16:18](#)).

abode — or “tarried” [Ellicott].

fifteen days — only fifteen days; contrasting with the long period of *three years*, during which, previously, he had exercised an independent commission in preaching: a fact proving on the face of it, how little he owed to Peter in regard to his apostolical authority or instruction. The *Greek* for “to see,” at the same time implies *visiting a person important to know*, such as Peter was. The plots of the Jews prevented him staying longer ([Act 9:29](#)). Also, the vision directing him to depart to the Gentiles, for that the people of Jerusalem would not receive his testimony ([Act 22:17](#), [Act 22:18](#)).

(19) But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Compare [Act 9:27](#), [Act 9:28](#), wherein Luke, as an historian, describes more generally what Paul, the subject of the history, himself details more particularly. The history speaks of “apostles”; and Paul’s mention of a *second* apostle, besides Peter, reconciles the Epistle and the history. At Stephen’s martyrdom, and the consequent persecution, the other ten apostles, agreeably to Christ’s directions, seem to have *soon* (though not *immediately*, [Act 8:14](#)) left Jerusalem to preach elsewhere. James remained in charge of the mother church, as its bishop. Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, was present during Paul’s fifteen days’ stay; but he, too, presently after ([Act 9:32](#)), went on a circuit through Judea.

James, the Lord’s brother — This designation, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, was appropriate while that apostle was alive. But before Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem ([Gal 2:1](#); [Act 15:1-4](#)), he had been beheaded by Herod ([Act 12:2](#)). Accordingly, in the subsequent mention of James here ([Gal 2:9](#), [Gal 2:12](#)), he is not designated by this distinctive epithet: a minute, undesigned coincidence, and proof of genuineness. James was the Lord’s brother, not in our strict sense, but in the sense, “cousin,” or “kinsman” ([Mat 28:10](#); [Joh 20:17](#)). His brethren are never called “sons of Joseph,” which they would have been had they been the Lord’s brothers strictly. However, compare [Psa 69:8](#), “I am an alien to *my mother’s children*.” In [Joh 7:3](#), [Joh 7:5](#), the “brethren” who believed not in Him may mean His *near relations*, not including the two of His brethren, that is, relatives (James and Jude) who were among the Twelve apostles. [Act 1:14](#), “His brethren,” refer to Simon and Joses, and others ([Mat 13:55](#)) of His kinsmen, who were not apostles. It is not likely there would be two pairs of brothers named alike, of such eminence as James and Jude; the likelihood is that the apostles James and Jude are also the writers of the Epistles, and the brethren of Jesus. James and Joses were sons of Alphaeus and Mary, sister of the Virgin Mary.

(20) (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)

Solemn asseveration that his statement is true that his visit was but for fifteen days and that he saw no apostle save Peter and James. Probably it had been reported by Judaizers that he had received a long course of instruction from the apostles in Jerusalem from the first; hence his earnestness in asserting the contrary facts.

(21) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

I came into ... Syria and Cilicia — “preaching the faith” ([Gal 1:23](#)), and so, no doubt, founding the churches in Syria and Cilicia, which he subsequently confirmed in the faith ([Act 15:23](#), [Act 15:41](#)). He probably went first to Caesarea, the main seaport, and thence by sea to Tarsus of Cilicia, his native place ([Act 9:30](#)), and thence to Syria; Cilicia having its geographical affinities with Syria, rather than with Asia Minor, as the Tarsus mountains separate it from the latter. His placing “Syria” in the order of words before “Cilicia,” is due to Antioch being a more important city than Tarsus, as also to his longer stay in the former city. Also “Syria and Cilicia,” from their close geographical

connection, became a generic geographical phrase, the more important district being placed first [Conybeare and Howson]. This sea journey accounts for his being “unknown by face to the churches of Judea” ([Gal 1:22](#)). He passes by in silence his *second* visit, with alms, to Judea and Jerusalem ([Act 11:30](#)); doubtless because it was for a limited and special object, and would occupy but a few days ([Act 12:25](#)), as there raged at Jerusalem at the time a persecution in which James, the brother of John, was martyred, and Peter was in prison, and James seems to have been the only apostle present ([Act 12:17](#)); so it was needless to mention this visit, seeing that he could not at such a time have received the instructions which the Galatians alleged he had derived from the primary fountains of authority, the apostles.

(22) And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.

(23) They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

(24) And they glorified God because of me.

So far was I from being a disciple of the apostles, that I was even *unknown in the churches of Judea* (excepting Jerusalem, [Act 9:26-29](#)), which were the chief scene of their labors.

Translate as *Greek*, “They were hearing”: tidings were brought them from time to time [Conybeare and Howson].

he which persecuted us in times past — “our former persecutor” [Alford]. The designation by which he was known among Christians still better than by his name “Saul.”

destroyed — *Greek*, “was destroying.”

in me — “in my case.” “Having understood the entire change, and that the former wolf is now acting the shepherd’s part, they received occasion for joyful thanksgiving to God in respect to me” [Theodoret]. How different, he implies to the Galatians, *their* spirit from *yours*!