**A Study of Galatians**

*Lesson 2: Gal 1:11-24 –* The Legitimacy of Paul’s Apostleship

***Galatians 1:11-24***

***11***But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.   ***12***For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught [it,] but [it came] through the revelation of Jesus Christ.   ***13***For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and [tried to] destroy it.   ***14***And I advanced in Juda-ism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceed-ingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.   ***15*** But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called [me] through His grace,   ***16***to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,   ***17***nor did I go up to Jeru-salem to those [who were] apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.   ***18***Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.   ***19***But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.   ***20***(Now [concerning] the things which I write to you, indeed, be-fore God, I do not lie.)   ***21***Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cili-cia.   ***22*** And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which [were] in Christ.   ***23***But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once [tried to] destroy."   ***24***And they glorified God in me.

**1. Paul’s Defense of the Gospel Through a defense of his Apostleship – 1:12-21**

A. 1:11-24 – Received by Revelation

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B. 1:11-12 – Paul independent apostleship asserted

C. 1:13-14 – Paul independent apostleship drawn from his life before his conversion.

D. 1:15-17 – Paul independent apostleship drawn from his coversion

E. 1:18-20 – Paul independent apostleship drawn from his first visit to Jerusalme after his conversion.

F. 1:21-24 – Paul independent apostleship drawn from his stay in Syria and Cilicia

**2. Early Contacts with the Apostles – 1:15-20**

A. 1:15-17 – Paul affirms again that he was called as an apostle by God.

1. He takes no credit for such a call but rather God *“called me through His grace.”*

2. The purpose of such an astounding act of heaven: *“to reveal His Son in me, that I*

*might preach Him among the Gentiles.”* In these affirmations Paul is giving the

Galatians a clear choice: He is God’s agent; He preaches God’s message. If they

embrace something else, they are rebelling against *God,* not merely Paul.

3. Paul gives a detail not included by Luke in Acts: after his conversion he went to

Arabia and back to Damascus, a period spanning three years. As intriguing as

this period is, Paul did not reveal what transpired during this time. But one

thing **didn’t** happen: he didn’t confer with the apostles in Jerusalem, either to

get their approval or learn the basics of the gospel from them.

B. 1:18-20 – Paul now refers to the incident in Ac 9:26-28. He affirms that there was

neither enough time nor a quorum of apostles for Paul to co-opt anything from

them. Paul then affirms before God the truthfulness of what he is reporting, per-

haps because false accounts were circulating.

**3. Paul’s Absence from Judea – 1:21-24**

A. Paul continues to assert that his distance from Palestine precluded a gradual as-

similation into Christianity by common association. His travel to the regions of

Syria and Cilicia apparently refer to his time in Tarsus after escaping Jerusalem

(Ac 9:30) and the work he did alongside Barnabas in Antioch (Ac 11:25-26).

B. Paul says he was *“unknown by face”* to the churches in Judea. In other words, Paul

preached the gospel he received from the Lord, concentrated his efforts among the

Gentiles as he was told – all unilaterally and without approval and/or oversight of

the apostles in Jerusalem or the brethren in Judea.

C. Note also that the Judean churches *“glorified God”* in the work Paul was doing, a

far cry from what the present Judaizers from this same area were now doing.

**Questions:**

1. Why is it so easy for us to “forget” that which we once knew?

2. What is the significance of the observation *“who separated me from my mother’s womb”?*

3. What lessons about our own service to God might we learn from Paul’s defense of

himself in this passage?