

Parson to Person
Galatians 1
(Exposition: Part 1)

“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:

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.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 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. 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.

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. 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" (Galatians 1).

Paul

We know a bit more about Paul's past—in comparison to some of the other apostles and prophets. We know Paul was a zealous Jewish member of the Sanhedrin, must have been married, considered all pre-Christian works of the flesh as "rubbish," was ashamed of his pre-Christian persecution of the Church, was saved by the grace of God, and turned from error to truth—pressing forward as a humble ambassador for Christ.

Paul's early life was not much different than some of ours. However, he suffered as a Christ follower in ways some of us will understand but others will never experience. Paul dealt with life's disappointments like we all do: recognized his shortcomings; was misunderstood, misrepresented, and put down; was rejected; felt need and want. However, he was also falsely accused, arrested, imprisoned, and put to death for Jesus—an experience many have never suffered nor ever will.

An Apostle

The word apostle simply means "sent one." However, there was a very unique "calling/sending" and a specific set of standards one was required to meet in order to be one of the first-century apostles. Specifically, the apostle must have been chosen by the Lord Himself—this is still true today. Secondly, it is thought that one must have been an eyewitness to Jesus' first incarnational life and ministry—along with His physical resurrection from the dead. This was delineated in Acts 1:15–26.

Paul: Called—in Time

Paul was not specifically enlisted as an apostle exactly as the other disciples/apostles. Paul (formerly known as Saul) was alive during Jesus' first incarnational ministry—but was not specifically called to Him during that time. We know that (during the time continuum) Paul was called on the road to Damascus several years following Jesus' first incarnational earthly ministry (see Acts 9:1–31). Therefore, Paul's "time-stamped" call was long after the physical ascension of Jesus.

Paul: Called—Before the Foundation of the World

Paul was called (like all believers) from pre-creation (outside of time).

Of himself Paul wrote, *"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"* (Galatians 1:15–16).

To believers he wrote, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved"* (Ephesians 1:3–6).

This tells us that God knew Paul (and all of us) before we were ever born. Moreover, God had (in His great foreknowledge) a purpose and plan for Paul's life—and also for us.

Every believer is known in the Lord from all eternity past and is predestined to the climactic purposes of God.

To the Romans Paul wrote, *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn*

among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:28–31).

Paul: Sent

Paul told the Galatians that he was called to be an apostle, *"not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead"* (vs. 1). His commission was specific to the Gentiles—but also demanded that the ministry of the Gospel must be to the Jew first (Romans 1:16).

We are Sent Too!

Every believer is called and sent. Distinctions are made concerning the specifics—as they were with Paul—but nonetheless, if you are called, then you are sent.

Paul told Timothy, *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:1–2). Therefore, by principle, when one shares with us, we are called to share with others.

Jesus told His disciples after washing their feet: *"So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them'"* (John 13:12–17).

To the Ephesians Paul wrote, *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:11–16).

If we are called, we are sent! As believers we are all sent to do the *“work of ministry.”* Therefore, like Paul, may we go forth (joyfully) in the calling of the Lord! No need to *“immediately confer with flesh and blood”* (vs. 16). You are called; you are sent. Go ye therefore... God will direct your steps (Proverbs 16:9).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul