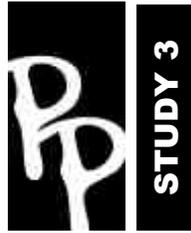


THE MESSAGE WAS NOT

INVENTED BY MAN



Galatians 1:10-14

This Study Paper contains the following :-

- 📁 Introduction to the passage
- 📁 What these verses mean
- 📁 Summary
- 📁 A suggestion of what to preach about from these verses
- 📁 Over to you

Introduction to the passage

The attack by the false teachers was subtle. They attacked the message by getting at the messenger. They didn't tell the Galatians to forget what Paul had taught them. Their approach was that what Paul had said was fine but it wasn't quite complete. Something else has to be added. The false teachers tried to do this by undermining Paul, by attacking him for not being a proper apostle and a proper Jew.

What these verses mean

Verse 10

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

Whom was Paul serving? ***Whom*** was he trying to please? Was he trying to win the favour of men or God? There was a time when the things he did were to please men. Now it was all so different; he has become a servant of Christ. He no longer tries to please men and boast of his religious successes. Paul is only interested in one thing, pleasing God. Otherwise, he would be a servant of men and not of Christ.

Verse 11

I want you to know,

This comes at the beginning of the verse in the Greek. By coming first, it indicates that a solemn and important statement follows. What Paul says here in this verse 11 is **very** important.

brothers,

Nine times in this letter, Paul calls the Galatians his brothers! In the Greek in which the letter was written, “brethren” is the last word before “Amen” (6:18) as though this is the thought he wants to leave in their minds. Even though the Galatians caused Paul such sorrow (see **Why did Paul write Galatians?** in the Introductory Study Paper), still he calls them “brothers”. Paul exposes the error the Galatians were about to fall into but does not cut them off from his friendship.

that the gospel I preached

Of several Greek words used of preaching in the New Testament, two are most common.

- One means to be a herald, or make a proclamation. It expresses the thought of the authority of the preacher – God’s herald!
- The other, ***and this is the word used in this verse,*** means to bring **good** news. It expresses the thought that the gospel is joyful news to anxious sinners. Perhaps Paul uses this word here to remind the Galatians that the gospel was a joy to them when they first heard it. Why therefore do they now pay heed to the false teachers who say that their first joyful faith in the gospel is not now enough for salvation? See 3:1.

is not something that man made up.

Paul means that the gospel message is not a human invention. The message of the gospel is therefore different from every other faith in the world for **they are all human** inventions. The Christian faith is something divinely revealed. See verse 12.

Verse 12

I did not receive it from any man,

The gospel was not a traditional message handed down from his fathers. ***nor was I taught it;***

The gospel was not a lesson learned from any teacher. See verse 1 also. His apostleship was not a human appointment, neither was his message!

rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

The word “revelation” literally means “taking the cover off something and so making it fully visible”. Paul is saying that, as with the other apostles, he too had been convinced about the rightness of the Christian

message because Jesus Christ made himself directly known to him. See Acts 9:5.

Verse 13

For you have heard

It may have been that Paul himself told them these things at the time he preached to them. The history of his old life was a part of Paul's preaching. See Acts 22:4; 1 Corinthians 15:9. "You heard" begins verse 13 in the Greek. It is therefore very significant. In effect, Paul is saying: "You ought to know that the gospel is not something I got from my traditions because ***I told you*** I was a convinced Pharisee and no Pharisee would invent the Christian faith."

of my previous way of life in Judaism,

Paul does ***not*** mean the Old Testament faith, for that should have led him to accept the Messiah (as some Jews did; see Luke 2:25,38). Paul means all the ceremonial rules and regulations worked out by the Pharisees and others, e.g. Matthew 23:3 – 7; 15: 1 – 9. This was a religion of ceremonial observances which Jesus condemned. Before his conversion Paul excelled in ***this*** religion! It was most unlikely that the gospel would be an idea Paul invented. Until Christ met him, Paul was content with Jewish ceremonies.

how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.

A better translation is: "I was persecuting" and "I was laying waste"; i.e. he did not succeed in completely doing either but was in the process of trying to. See Acts 8:3,4. There is a correspondence course of lessons called "What the Bible teaches about the church of God." Write to ask about receiving these if you have not already studied them.

Verse 14

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age

The Greek word to "advance" means "to cut down things that block one's path ahead". Paul is indicating how vigorously he tried to climb to the top as the most zealous Pharisee, over all his contemporaries! All this emphasises how unlikely it was that Paul's gospel was a human idea. His purpose is to show that the gospel he preached is *from God* and not from himself.

and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

The same Greek word "traditions" is used by Jesus in Matthew 15:3,6 to mean the extra rules and ceremonies devised by the Pharisees. See note above on "Judaism" (verse 13).



Summary

In this section of the letter Paul is answering those teachers who were trying to mislead the Galatian believers. They were attacking Paul's gospel of salvation by faith alone. Paul is proving here that his gospel is not a mere human theory. It was a message received from God ***which completely altered his previous human religious thinking.*** Paul's gospel therefore is divine. To attack it is to attack God! The Galatians should not be deceived. Since Paul's message was given him by God, no man should try to add to it, or alter it.



A suggestion of what to preach about from these verses

The gospel is the power of God

Introduction

In Romans 1 Paul describes the gospel as the power of God. Galatians 1:6-14 shows how true this statement is. Only a divine and miracle-working power could make Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Christian, because:

- a. He hated the Christian faith (verse13)
- b. He loved his ceremonial religion (verse14)
- c. He was a fiercely ambitious Pharisee (verse14).

When he was converted, the early Christians could hardly believe it! (Acts 9:13,26). Such a man being changed into a Christian preacher can only be explained as a miracle of God's power. Paul knew what he was talking about when he wrote Romans 1:16. Can we say that God's power, the gospel, has changed our lives? See what changes took place in Paul's life:

1. What he formerly hated, now he loves

He hated the church, verse 13. The reason for Saul's hatred of Christians was not that they lived evil lives, nor that their beliefs were wicked. Like Jesus before them, they went about doing good! Yet Saul was so influenced by his religious ideas that he was too blind to see their good lives and was prepared to do harm to the Christians. Now, however, he calls them his "brothers" (1:2,11). Compare 1 John 3:14.

He now writes in praise of “the grace of Christ”, verse 6; and he defends “the gospel of Christ”, verse 7.

2. What he formerly loved, now he hates

He used to love performing the many religious ceremonies of Pharisaic tradition which he felt sure would make God pleased with him. Compare Phil. 3:5,6. Now he knows that salvation is by being “called into the grace of Christ”, verse 6; and that “Christ gave himself to deliver us”, verse 4. Salvation is “according to the will of God”, verse 4, *not* according to the will of Saul! Any other teaching is now called “another gospel” by Paul, verse 6, which has God’s curse on it, verses 8 and 9.

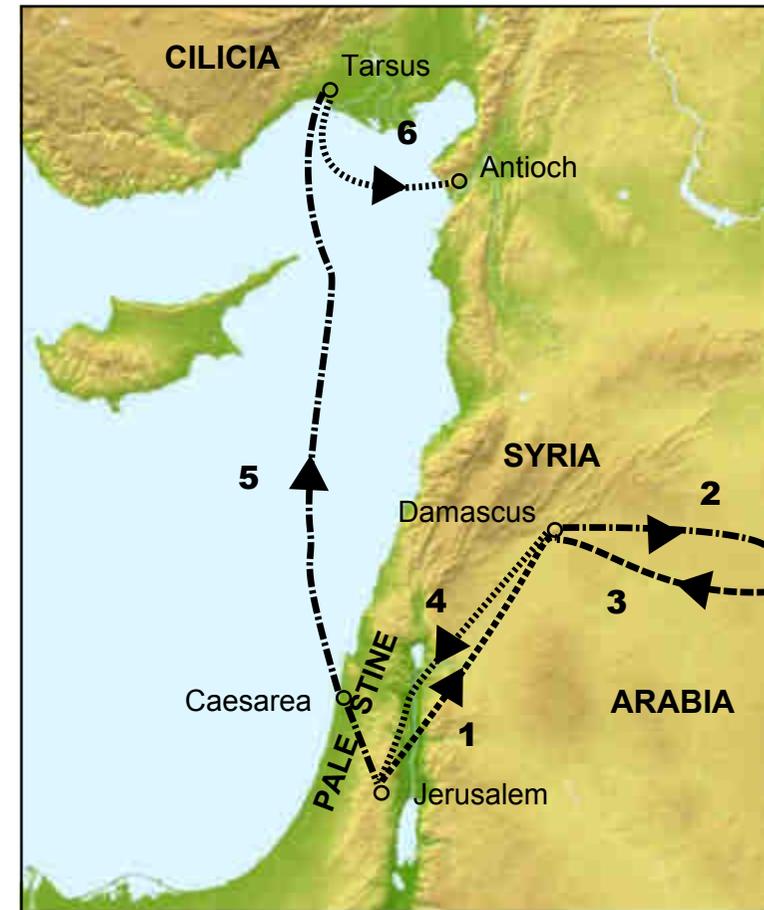
3. Instead of human traditions he now has divine revelation

All his earlier religious ideas come, he says, from “the traditions of my fathers”, verse 14. Things that we learn from our fathers may be right – they may also be wrong. Our fathers can easily make mistakes. But now Paul has been shown the truth by Jesus Christ himself, verse 12. Compare John 14:6. Paul knows his fathers were wrong and he rejects their teaching. We must examine our ideas by comparing them with what the Bible teaches (2 Tim. 3:16).

Conclusion

Can you say that God has, through your understanding of the Bible and by the Holy Spirit’s persuasion in your thinking, changed you in three ways? Can you identify something you hated which now, as a Christian, you love? Or something you loved which now, as a Christian, you hate? Do you regard Bible teaching as more important than your local religious customs? If the power of God has not changed your life, are you a Christian?

Paul’s early years



- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Jerusalem to Damascus | Acts 9:1-18 |
| 2. Damascus to Arabia | Galatians 1:17 |
| 3. Arabia to Damascus | Galatians 1:17 |
| 4. Damascus to Jerusalem | Galatians 1:18 |
| 5. Jerusalem to Tarsus | Acts 9:29-30 |
| 6. Tarsus to Antioch | Acts 11:25, 26 |



Over to you

When you preach where do the words you are using come from?

If you were criticised for the content of your preaching, how would you defend yourself?

Can you trace the way God has called you to be a preacher from the time of your conversion?