

# PAUL'S AUTHORITY AND GOSPEL

Lesson 2 for  
July 8, 2017



Many people believed Paul's letters were inspired by God, but others didn't.

Some people in Galatia were deceiving Christians by teaching "another gospel."

Paul tried to deal with that by explaining the source and the authority of the gospel at the beginning of his letter to the Corinthians.

- Divine inspiration. 2 Peter 3:15-16.
- Apostolic authority. Galatians 1:1-2.
- The gospel. Galatians 1:3-5.
- The other gospel. Galatians 1:6-9.
- Paul and the gospel. Galatians 1:10-24.

# DIVINE INSPIRATION

"[...] as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (2 Peter 3:15-16)

According to Peter, around year 60 AD, people already believed Paul's letters had been inspired by God, and they were considered as the same level as the Scriptures (the Old Testament).

Paul wrote those letters in common Greek, and he used the epistolary style of his time: **(1)** Salutation, mentioning the sender and the addressees; **(2)** gratitude; **(3)** main part of the letter; **(4)** conclusion.

His letters were publicly read at church, and copies were sent to other churches (Colossians 4:16).



# APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY



“Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)” (Galatians 1:1)

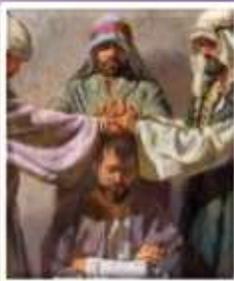
Why did some people reject the divine authority of Paul’s letters?



Paul wasn’t one of the 12 apostles that Jesus chose.



Some people said he was authorized by Ananias.



Others accepted him just as a missionary that Antioch authorized.



They thought the gospel of Paul undermined obedience because he emphasized salvation by faith alone.

That’s why Paul began his letter by stating that no human authority was endorsing his apostolate.

He was made apostle by Jesus Christ.



# THE GOSPEL

"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." (Galatians 1:3-4)

*Grace and peace*

Paul used to greet the churches with two words:

- 1) Grace. *Jaris*, a variation of the Greek greeting "cheers" (*jairein*)
- 2) Peace. A traditional Jewish greeting.

His salutation addressed both Jewish and Gentiles.

In addition, Paul stressed that grace and peace was not just his own desire, but gifts that God gives.

Then he explained the gospel just before finishing his greeting: Jesus' death makes us free from sin.



# THE OTHER GOSPEL

**"I 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."  
(Galatians 1:6 NIV)**

**Paul used to praise the church he was addressing before beginning with the main part of the letter.**

**Nevertheless, there is no praise for the Galatians, just accusations: you "are turning to a different gospel."**

**He later explains (v. 7) that there's not a different gospel. They had accepted the teaching that having faith in Christ is not enough for salvation, and that's not the true gospel.**

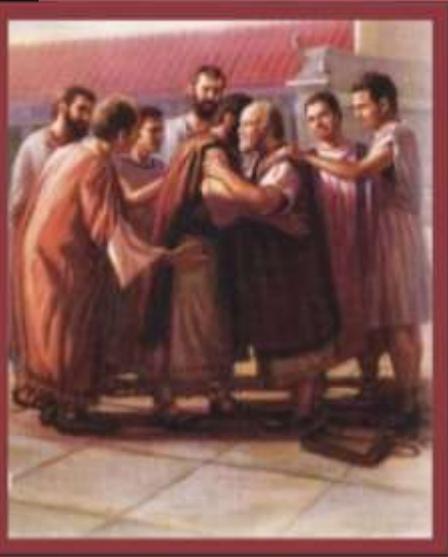
**Paul is accusing them of being deserters. They left the pure gospel to join another gospel.**

**The harshest words in Paul's letter are addressed to those who were preaching salvation by works (v. 8-9).**



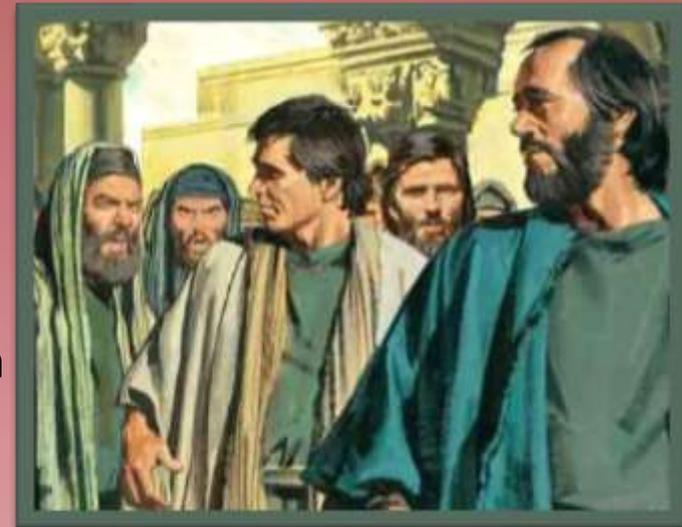
# PAUL AND THE GOSPEL (I)

**“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.” (Galatians 1:10)**



**The main point of the Judaizers against Paul was that he didn't compel the Gentiles to circumcise (Acts 15:5).**

**They said Paul was trying to win the Gentiles' favor.**



**They also said that Paul didn't make them circumcise because he wanted fast conversions and the Gentiles wouldn't accept that rite.**

**Did an ex-member of the Sanhedrin need any praises from men? If he did, then he wouldn't have accepted the dangerous and unpopular mission of preaching the gospel.**



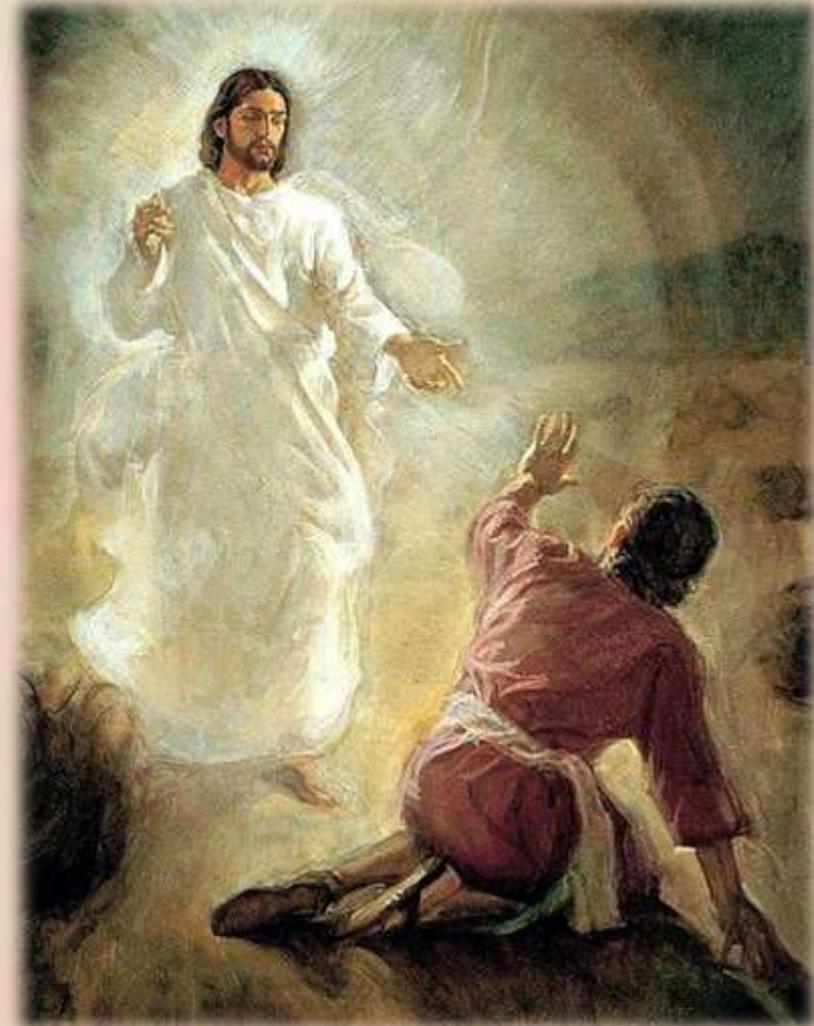
# PAUL AND THE GOSPEL (II)

**“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.”**  
(Galatians 1:11-12)

**First Paul exposed the false teachers in Galatia and defended his true motivation. Then he explained the authority of the gospel he was preaching.**

**Jesus Christ revealed the gospel to him “when it pleased to God... to reveal His Son in me” (v. 15-16).**

**In verses 13 to 24, Paul told his life story since his conversion until the moment he was commissioned as a missionary to the Gentiles. That brief autobiography proves that he didn’t contact any man that could teach him the gospel. The gospel was fully revealed to him during his retreat in Arabia.**



**“To substitute external forms of religion for holiness of heart and life is still as pleasing to the unrenewed nature as it was in the days of these Jewish teachers. Today, as then, there are false spiritual guides, to whose doctrines many listen eagerly. It is Satan’s studied effort to divert minds from the hope of salvation through faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God. In every age the archenemy adapts his temptations to the prejudices or inclinations of those whom he is seeking to deceive. In apostolic times he led the Jews to exalt the ceremonial law and reject Christ; at the present time he induces many professing Christians, under pretense of honoring Christ, to cast contempt on the moral law and to teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity. It is the duty of every servant of God to withstand firmly and decidedly these perverters of the faith and by the word of truth fearlessly to expose their errors.”**

E.G.W. (The Acts of the Apostles, cp. 36, pg. 387)