

# Galatians

***Freed by Christ To Follow the Spirit***

Galatians 1:10-2:14

“Don’t Forget Who’s Really in Charge”

Phil de Martimprey

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Key Truth

**Submitting to God’s Authority Sets us Free**

Paul had brought the gospel message to the people of Galatia and they had been set free! But in his absence, the “agitators” had brought a two pronged attack into the Galatian churches, they took aim at **the man** and **the message**. On the one hand they were attacking Paul, his background, character, apostleship and authority. On the other, they were attacking the gospel Paul had preached, bringing doubt into its origin, authenticity, validity and authority. Last week we saw that Paul began his letter with a tone of exceptional disapproval and shock, as the Galatian churches were being led astray by these agitators and false teachers. What we will look at this week is how Paul uses his life story to remove all doubt about his authority and the authority of the gospel he preached.

**(Gal 1:10)** Paul begins by setting the record straight in regards to his motivation for preaching the gospel. There was an accusation that he was simply seeking men's approval and goodwill. After all, Paul's gospel was easy, all you had to do was have faith, you didn't have to follow the law at all! But nothing could be further from the truth. Paul was a servant of Christ, and a person cannot seek to please man and God at the same time. If they needed to be further convinced that Paul wasn't simply trying to please men, they only needed to look again at how severely he opens this letter to them! Paul will spend a considerable amount of time recapping to them his personal story, which will defend two primary and fundamental truths: **The Gospel's authority came from God**, and **Paul's authority came from God**. We will trace these two themes through Galatians 1:11-2:14.

**(Gal 1:11-12)** Paul makes it clear that the gospel did not originate from man, he wasn't taught it by any man, but rather it was taught to him through direct revelation from God. He didn't learn it from the other apostles, or anyone else. And, because it came directly from God, it carried God's authority. Paul uses his own conversion story to prove this point. He was so convinced of the claims of Judaism and so hated the claims of Christianity, that only a direct revelation from God would have been able to so radically change his life. **(2:1-9)** Another supporting fact was that even when Paul did meet with the other leading apostles and spoke to them about the gospel he had been preaching, they didn't change a single thing about it, but rather confirmed that it was God's gospel indeed.

**(Gal 1:15-17)** Paul's point in these verses is that he didn't consult with anyone regarding this gospel. No man helped him work it out and figure out all the details. It was God who revealed this all to Paul. God revealed that Jesus was the messiah, and that only through faith in Jesus' life, death and resurrection could one be made right with God. Paul spent about three years in

the desert region, and I believe this is where he went to study the Old Testament scriptures and build his theology, and this probably would have been where God specially revealed the truth of the gospel to him. Very possibly he spent time with the risen Jesus being prepared for the ministry he was about to embark on. After a brief visit to Jerusalem where he saw Peter and James, he then spent 10+ years preaching this gospel in Syria and Cilicia, gentile areas. Paul had clearly been given divine authority to preach this gospel, he didn't need the approval or confirmation from the apostles that he was teaching the truth. When he did finally come and spend some time in Jerusalem with the apostles, his desire was to ensure that the same gospel was going to both the Jew's and the Gentiles. He was pleased to find that it was, for he had taken Titus, a Greek, with him, which immediately would have been a problem if the message from Jerusalem was that freedom comes from obeying the law. So they were unified in their message and Paul began his first missionary journey, where the churches of Galatia were born. **(Gal 2:11-14)** Paul wraps up this section with a story that illustrated that both he and the gospel had authority from God. He directly opposed Peter, a man with authority of his own. He saw that Peter's actions were opposed to the gospel and that many were led astray because of it, so Paul didn't hesitate to defend the gospel on the basis of his God given authority, and confidence in the gospels authority.

As we let these truth sink into our own hearts and minds, it is a powerful reminder about who and what is the authority in our own lives. Though none of us will quite have the degree of life change that Paul experience, we will have a testimony of how God's authority has changed our lives. Our culture is radically self centered and God's word is in direct conflict with this. Not only does our initial salvation require humility and an attitude of submission, but our spiritual growth does as well! The degree to which we are surrendered to God's authority will have a direct impact on our willingness to be discipled, and make disciples. Many people want to say that Jesus has authority, but don't take seriously the other New Testament authors like Peter, James and Paul. I hope it is absolutely clear that these apostles carried God's authority in their message of the gospel and how it relates to our lives. And that we should take very seriously God's authority in our lives.