

## Galatians, Chapter One, Lesson Four

THE LEADING OF GOD Galatians 1:18-24

### STIMULATE

\*\* From our study last time, how would you describe the person of Paul before he met Jesus Christ?

He was:

- 1) Hateful
- 2) Violent
- 3) Self-righteous
- 4) A murderer
- 5) Fooled by the traditions of men

\*\* How much of that dreadful past was effective in disqualifying Paul from serving the Lord?

None of it! When he placed his faith in Jesus Christ, he became a new creature.  
(2Corinthians 5:17)

\*\* With that in mind, how have you done this week in remaining committed to serve the Lord? Have you been thankful to Him for removing your sin from you as far as the east is from the west? (Psalm 103:12)

Absolutely yes! We must hold fast to our calling to serve the Lord, we must proclaim His forgiveness of our sin and bring glory to His name.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* Once we have responded to the effectual call of God in Christ Jesus, does He lead us through the events of our life as we strive to serve Him? We will learn the answer to that question as we finish chapter one in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Please join me there for our study entitled, "The Leading of God". (Verses 18-24)

Read passage (V.18-20) (V.21-24)

Opening Prayer

### *The Leading of God*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.18** \*\* Do you recall from last week where this three year period began and how Paul spent it?

It began at his conversion (Acts 9:15). Paul spent the majority of that time in the Arabian wilderness with Jesus Christ. cf. Acts 9:16 He then returned to Damascus for a relatively brief stay before leaving for Jerusalem. All see - Acts 9:19-22

\*\* What was one of the reasons for Paul leaving the town of Damascus?

He was led by the Lord to escape for his life!

Acts 9:23-25 (cf. Acts 20:3, 17-19, 23:12-16, 26:15-18)

\*\* Now back in Galatians 1:18, what additional reason does our text today give for his leaving?

He "went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas..."

\*\* Who is that?

That is our beloved friend, the apostle Peter. Peter being his Greek name and Simon his Hebrew name (Cephas is Aramaic for Peter).

\*\* Why did Paul use his Aramaic name?

Because it was the name specifically given him by Jesus Christ! Remember, Paul had just spent three years with Christ in the wilderness of Arabia and would have returned with that knowledge. (John 1:42)

\*\* Why do you suppose Paul would want to get to know Peter?

Because he (Peter) was the spokesman of the twelve and was with Christ during His three year earthly ministry. Paul could gain great insight from becoming acquainted with this brother in the Lord.

\*\* Do you think that after waiting three years since his conversion, Paul then stayed a long time with Peter?

No - he spent just fifteen days! Again, the Lord was going to lead in the life of Paul.

\*\* Why did he leave Jerusalem after only two weeks?

The Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill Paul. The one who once killed Christians was now hunted himself to be killed! Once more, let's look in Acts 9:26-30

\*\* From Acts 9:29, who were the Hellenistic Jews?

These were Jewish people who were not from the Palestine area. They were Greek speaking and had adopted much of the Greek culture. They were most likely the same group that had stoned Stephen back in Acts 7:58-59. cf Acts 6:1, 9

**V.19** \*\* As we return again to Galatians, this time 1:19, how many "apostles" did Paul see in Jerusalem on this short visit?

Two - Peter and James, this is what Luke had in mind when he said in Acts 9:27, "Barnabas took hold of him [Paul] and brought him to the apostles..."

\*\* Where was everybody else?

Due to the persecution that had started, they were fulfilling Acts 1:8 where Jesus said, "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

\*\* Does anyone know where we can find a list of the twelve apostles?

Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16

\*\* What problem does this verse present in light of those lists?

This "James" is not an apostle chosen by Christ in those lists!

**\*\* Why then would Paul use the term apostle?**

James was a recognized leader of the Jerusalem church.(cf. Gal. 2:9, Acts 12:17) These spiritually qualified leaders who guided the church in the absence of the "Twelve" were often called apostles. This was true of Barnabas as well. cf. Acts 14:14

**\*\* By the way, according to our verse, which James is this?**

He is the Lord's half-brother! cf. Matt. 1:24-25, Matt. 12:46, John 7:3-5, Acts 1:14, 15:13 & 19, 21:17-18 James had become the head of the Jerusalem church!

**V.20 \*\* What subtle clue does Paul give us that what he is writing is going to be challenged by his enemies, the Judaizers?**

He makes the bold statement, "I am not lying".

**\*\* Who is the witness that Paul calls upon to verify His message?**

God Almighty! This was in the form of a Jewish vow and as such was not to be taken lightly because it reinforced the authority of Paul's gospel message.

**V.21 \*\* When Paul left Jerusalem, where did the Lord lead him to next?**

"...into the regions of Syria and Cilicia..." (check your map in the back of your Bible)

**\*\* In what major town in Syria did Paul stay?**

Antioch, for one year (Acts 11:26)

**\*\* Before Paul made it to Antioch, in what town had Paul stayed in Cilicia?**

According to Acts 9:30 and 11:25 it was in his home town [Acts 22:3] of Tarsus. Most commentators agree that it was for a period of several years!

**V.22 \*\* Even though Paul had traveled so extensively (while obeying the "Leading of God") do you think that other Christians outside of Jerusalem could recognize him?**

No - He "...was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea..." These were separate and distinct churches outside of the city of Jerusalem.

**\*\* What did they all have in common?**

They were churches "in Christ". They were genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**V.23 \*\* Even though they had not seen Paul and could not recognize him, what did they know about him?**

He who once persecuted the church was now preaching faith in Jesus Christ! Remember Paul had become a new creature (2Corinthians 5:17). The statement made here in verse 23 is one of exuberant exclamation. These people were excited about the change God had brought about in Paul's life!

**\*\* Again, what was it that Paul was preaching?**

The "faith". This is the embodiment of truth regarding the gospel and Christ. cf. Galatians 2:16

**\*\* Are you noticing that "The Leading of God" changes the reputation which precedes you?**

Once the Lord saved Paul and called him into service, Paul's reputation went from persecutor to preacher! The same is true for us who have placed our faith in Christ, He will lead us daily into a reputation that can be used for His glory no matter how vile our past has been.

**V.24 \*\* Besides being excited over the change in Paul, how were these Christians of Judea responding to this great news regarding the apostle?**

"...they were glorifying God because of [Paul]."

In spite of how vile Paul had been, these believers were now bringing glory to God because of what He had done in Paul's life!

### **EXTRICATE**

**\*\* We know that it is God who leads us to salvation and then on through the travels and events of our daily walk with Him. What is the ultimate goal of "The Leading of God" in our lives?**

It is that we would all glorify Him!

### **DELINEATE**

**\*\* How should we feel today about some wretched sinner who has been transformed by God?**

1) We should praise God for His glorious work of salvation. (Galatians 1:24)

2) We should accept the new saint into the body of Christ, forgetting his sinful past. (2Cor.5:17)

3) We should encourage him or her and build them up for service to the Lord. (Ephesians 4:12)

### **EVALUATE**

**\*\* What impact should "The Leading of God" have on your confidence to speak up for Jesus Christ.**

We can go forth knowing that it is God Himself who is determining the events of our daily travels and setting the Divine appointments for us to share His gospel truth with others! Our confidence is in the glorious truth that we have been approved by God and if He is for us, who can be [successfully] against us? (Romans 8:31)

### **ACTIVATE**

**\*\* How will you apply this wonderful truth? Will you be more bold now that you understand the God is leading you each day? Please take a moment now and go before Him in silent prayer. Thank the Lord for His calling and the privilege you have to live for Him.**

Closing prayer