

Galatians 1:13-24 Grace Christian Huynh

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13 For ye have heard of my participation in times past in the Jews' religion, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and wasted it.

14 I profited in the Jews' religion beyond many of my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Paul used to follow the traditional laws of Judaism which he referred to as the traditions of his fathers. This syntax implies that these laws he used to follow were laws of men, not laws of God. Paul reminded the Galatians of his large role of persecuting the Christians, the true followers of Christ. He was so effective at carrying out this large scale massacre that he was at a level of high respect among his colleagues.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace,

16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, I conferred not immediately with flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus.

Paul referred to God choosing him or setting him apart for the ministry that God had planned for him with the phrase, "when it pleased God." Paul credited God for the blessings in his life which include being chosen by Him to carry out a useful task. In fact, it was by God's grace that Paul was chosen and saved by his faith. In other words, God favored and exhibited mercy on Paul and called him to his purpose.

Paul did not immediately confer with other people about the revelation of Christ in him. It seems that the reason why Paul went to Arabia was so that he could have time with God without the distractions from home.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But I saw none of the other apostles save James, the Lord's brother.

20 (Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.)

He finally went up to Jerusalem and met Cephas and James who were the only apostles there. He spent quite a while with the two perhaps to share his new experience and the gospel he received directly from Christ with them. It was at this time he built a personal relationship with the apostles for the first time. Paul also assured his audience that what he has said and what he is about to say is true.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia,

After Paul's visit with the apostles, he traveled to Syria and Cilicia to continue his mission.

22 and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judea which were in Christ;

23 but they had heard only that, "He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

24 And they glorified God in me.

The Churches in Judea had never seen nor met him before. They only knew of his past and that he now served the Lord. A man who was an enemy of Christians and who was fervent in the persecution of their brothers and sisters was now a dedicated brother in Christ. This news was so incredible. They praised God because of the miraculous conversion of Paul. The Church glorified God because of Paul.

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13 For ye have heard of my participation in times past in the Jews' religion, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and wasted it.

Paul previously had persecuted the Christians under the traditional Jewish law makers and teachers, thinking that he was serving God but was actually serving men. The reason why Paul must mention this is because this is part of his incredible path to salvation, showing that someone who would brutally crush the Christians without doubt could not have been completely converted by the testimony of a man. For a person who so zealously did what he thought was the Lord's work, only God would be able to show him the error of his ways.

14 I profited in the Jews' religion beyond many of my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Paul, from his work for the Jewish authorities, was likely a high ranking official for persecuting the Christians. Paul had been very dedicated in keeping and protecting the Jewish traditions that were made by men, not God. Paul had dedicated much of his time to enforcing these false teachings of the Jews, gaining in prosperity and respect because he worked for men and not God. For him to abandon the teachings of men join the Christians whom he persecuted so harshly and lose all he received from man would be very significant in showing that the power of God can change the heart of anyone.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace,

When it pleased God, would be when God has decided on the perfect opportunity to call upon Paul for service. God would see it fit to call Paul to service when he had reached enough fame from persecuting the Christians, so that He could display His power over us in being able to completely change a man to become what he persecuted.

Being called by God's grace to service means being given the honor of being able to serve God's true purpose, despite any past a person could have. It is by God's grace that we could be forgiven of our sins and called to a purpose that pleases God. God could call upon any for service, despite religion, social status, wealth, or education. God's still calls upon men today, such as the ISIS executioner who had been called to salvation by a martyr sent from God [1].

16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, I conferred not immediately with flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus.

Because of Paul's past he could not see the truth of God. Paul was blinded by the Jewish doctrine that caused him to persecute the Christians. When God chose to "reveal **in**" Paul the truth, God chose to light up the soul of Paul from the inside, instead of "revealing **unto** him", or just showing Paul the truth. God brought the realization of Christ's truth into Paul's inner soul, giving Paul the feeling that Christ is the true way to salvation through his heart.

Paul, being given the task to spread the Gospel of God to the Gentiles, had initially not discussed what he had seen or been given to any other human. Paul would be able to provide an excellent testimony of his path to Christ, due to his past of persecuting the Christians.

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19 But I saw none of the other apostles save James, the Lord's brother.

20 (Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.)

Paul, after receiving the Gospel from Christ (Galatians 1:12) in Arabia, would go to Cephas and James to speak about the mission God had given him along with how he had received the Gospel. Paul makes sure to mention the short duration of his visits, and the lack of his meeting with the other apostles in order to explain how he had only been proselytized by God, and not any other person.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia,

22 and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judea which were in Christ;

23 but they had heard only that, "He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

24 And they glorified God in me.

While Paul had traveled around to spread the Gospel of Christ, he was only known by word to many other Christians. Paul's testimony of his transition from one who persecuted Christians to a man who now believes in Christ and spreads His word would give reason for many Christians to praise God. Paul's testimony is proof that through the power of God, any may come to Christ to be saved.

Note

[1]

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/isis.militant.coverts.to.christianity.after.meeting.jes.us.in.a.deam/55408.htm>