

**1195 Paul preached revealed Gospel with dying and living with Lord - Gal(1)1-(3)9
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discussed the greeting and why the Book of Galatians is Paul's third epistle, citing previous articles. Second, we mentioned that Christ preached the gospel, not bad news. Third, we discussed how the gospel Paul preached came from revelation and his first trip to Jerusalem, citing previous articles and briefly addressing a potentially controversial issue. Fourth, we described how the Jerusalem Council confirmed Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles, citing two previous articles. Fifth, we discussed how Paul had no choice but to rebuke Peter because Peter's actions were inconsistent with the truth of the gospel, and we observed the maturity of Peter's life in the end. Sixth, we addressed how Paul died and lived with Christ—something every Christian is called to do. Finally, we briefly mentioned the need to rely on the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to completion.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (6/21/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. Greetings and why the Book of Galatians is Paul's third epistle

"Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen."(Galatians 1:1-5)

First, we see that the recipients are the churches in Galatia. Then Paul states the fact of his apostleship—that he was indeed chosen by the Lord, as is evident from what the Lord said to Ananias: "...Go, for he (Paul) is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel."(Acts 9:15) The fact that Paul was an apostle can also be seen in this passage: "But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, ..." (Acts 14:14) Barnabas was not personally chosen by the Lord Jesus, yet he was still an apostle. Compared to his earlier greetings, Paul's greeting here is essentially the same, with the addition of one fact: "...the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."(Galatians 1:3-4)

And his vision: "to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen."(Galatians 1:5)

As for why the Book of Galatians is Paul's third epistle, we have previously discussed in "1192 Paul's first book and some situations of the Thessalonian church – 1 Thess.(1)1 – (2)20" under "1. The Book of 1 Thessalonians is the first book Paul wrote," Paul simply had no time to write epistles while he was on his missionary journeys, not until "...he left Athens and went to Corinth."(Acts 18:1) Therefore, the Book of Galatians, like the Books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, was written in Corinth.

Looking further at his writing habits at that time, he wrote his letters in the order of the places he visited: he first went to Thessalonica, then to the region of Galatia, and only then to Corinth. The Bible states it this way: "They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas."(Acts 16:6-8) At that time, they did indeed pass through the region of Galatia, though they did not stay there. Later, "And having spent some time there (in Antioch), he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples."(Acts 18:23) Paul did indeed reach the region of Galatia before going to Corinth, so the Epistle to the Galatians is Paul's third epistle.

2. Christ preached the Gospel, not bad news

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ."(Galatians 1:6-10)

It was stated from the very beginning that Christ's grace produced the one and only Gospel, not an altered "gospel of doom." Those who preach this "gospel of doom" are to be cursed, and this remains true today. Truly, do not preach an altered "gospel of doom"; instead, preach the truth according to the teachings of Scripture. Today, there are many so-called churches that blatantly fail to preach according to the teachings of Scripture—how can they avoid the curse spoken of here!

But people are weak and tend to twist Scripture, just as Peter said: "...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."(2 Peter 3:15-16) Although God is just, "...the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."(Luke 12:48) Yet this does not mean there is no punishment, just as the Scripture says, "Then the LORD passed by in front of him (Moses) and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.""(Exodus 34:6-7) Therefore, once you realize you have been misinterpreting the Bible, you must repent. The Bible contains this promise: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) If you persist in refusing to

repent, you will end up under a curse, creating a god that is not the God described in the Bible.

Next, the verses rephrase a message mentioned earlier: "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts."(1 Thessalonians 2:4) It is by seeking to please God that one becomes a bond-servant of Christ.

3. The Gospel Paul preached came from revelation and his first journey to Jerusalem

"For I would have you know, 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 I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." And they were glorifying God because of me."(Galatians 1:11-24)

Paul was a true Christian: "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."(1 John 3:9) Lying is a sin, and it is impossible for him to have knowingly and willfully lied. Here, he clearly states that the gospel he preached came from revelation. As further evidence, he specifies the time of his first visit to Jerusalem; prior to that, he had no opportunity to receive the gospel from the apostles or the church in Jerusalem. He also specifically mentions James, the Lord's brother, who was clearly a Christian at that time—otherwise he would not have been there—but before, he did not believe in the Lord, as the Scripture says: "Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers were believing in Him."(John 7:3-5) We see the transformation that came about because of Jesus' suffering.

Let's look at what happened before that. We know that before Paul was saved, he was so zealous for Judaism that, as this passage says, he persecuted the church. The final part of this passage refers to this very event, but the result was, "And they were glorifying God because of me."(Galatians 1:24)

God is all-knowing. One of the scriptures says, "Your eyes have seen my unformed substance (H1564, appearing only once here); And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them." (Psalm 139:16) He set Paul apart from his mother's womb and graciously called him—calling him in the sense of summoning him into the great light. We previously discussed this event in considerable detail in "1177 Saul saw great light, Ananias, and Peter raised Tabitha – Acts(9)1-43" under "1. The three accounts of Christ appearing to Saul," so please refer to that article.

We know that Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, just as this Scripture says, "(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)." (Galatians 2:8) Regarding this, we know that God's will is as follows: "But the Lord said to him (Ananias), "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel."" (Acts 9:15) So Paul did indeed proclaim the Lord's name before kings and the people of Israel, but since they largely rejected it, Paul and Barnabas boldly declared: "...It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46)

Finally, regarding his revelation, some might think that the "three years" mentioned here refers to the three years he spent in the wilderness of Arabia receiving his revelation. However, this passage refers to the three years that passed after his return to Damascus. Out of respect for God, there is really no need to speculate, and this point is not that important anyway; whether it is correct or not has absolutely no bearing on salvation.

4. The Council in Jerusalem confirmed Paul as the apostle to the gentiles

"Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do." (Galatians 2:1-10)

"Fourteen years" refers to the Council of Jerusalem, which was convened to discuss the issue of circumcision, because "Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the

brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue."(Acts 15:1-2) When they arrived in Jerusalem, "All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles."(Acts 15:12) This is consistent with what is stated here: "...I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, ..." (Galatians 2:2), though it adds that they went by revelation and with Titus.

Finally, there is the account of Peter and James's discussion (see Acts 15:7-21), in which it is stated, "After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me.""(Acts 15:13) The Book of Galatians specifically mentions, "But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother."(Galatians 1:19) However, the Bible does not explicitly state that this James in Acts 15:13 was the Lord's brother, so we cannot draw a definitive conclusion.

Although Paul knew full well that the Gospel derived from revelation was absolutely correct, he still shared it with those he felt he ought to tell, so he "...did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain."(Galatians 2:2) From his fellowship with them, they had been "...seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised."(Galatians 2:7) Finally, he mentioned, "They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do."(Galatians 2:10)

He did not cite the decision made in Jerusalem in Galatians because he knew that decision did not come from the Holy Spirit. Regarding this point, we previously discussed this issue in "1182 James's view, decision not by Holy Spirit, and Silas and Mark – Acts(15)13–41" under "2. The erroneous decision of the apostles, the elders, and the whole church." Essentially, this is because the will of the Holy Spirit would never contradict what Jesus said. We also examined the same issue from a different perspective in "1192 Paul's first book and some situations of the Thessalonian church – 1 Thess.(1)1–(2)20" under "1. The Book of 1 Thessalonians is the first book Paul wrote." Please refer to these articles.

We note that although he had previously circumcised Timothy (cf. Acts 16:3), he did not require Titus—who was a Greek—to be circumcised, because he knew that circumcision was essentially optional, just as this Scripture says: "...circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."(Romans 2:29) Those who insist that people be circumcised are false brothers; they do not allow others to have the freedom given by Jesus, as this scripture says: "So if the Son makes you free (G1659, twice),, you will be free (G1658) indeed." (John 8:36) False brothers will not act according to what the Lord has said. The Greek language has no a comparative tense, so repeating twice is used to indicate the comparative tense.

5. Paul had no choice but to rebuke Peter because his actions were inconsistent with the truth of the Gospel

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

"We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor."(Galatians 2:11-18)

The passage states that Paul had no choice but to rebuke Peter; even though he knew Peter was the foremost among the apostles, he had to oppose him face-to-face. This was because Peter's actions were inconsistent with the truth of the gospel. In other words, this echoes what was said earlier: "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you."(Galatians 2:5) This passage speaks of justification by faith in Christ and further states that Christ does not lead anyone into sin. The content is clearly explained in the text, and we can see that Paul's logic is very clear. Please take a look at the passage.

We also see the maturity of Peter's life in the end, for even though Paul confronted him face-to-face at that time, Peter later said, "...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."(2 Peter 3:15-16) The same kind of misinterpretation of the Bible occurs today, so these words are also addressed to us.

6. Paul dies and lives with Christ

"For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."(Galatians 2:19-21)

He understood very clearly that justification comes through faith: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."(Romans 3:28) Of course, he knew that works of faith are necessary, as this verse states: "Even so faith, if it has no works, is

dead, being by itself."(James 2:17) But it is important to understand that justification requires faith alone; when one has true faith, works of faith will naturally follow.

I used to think that only someone like Paul could die and live with Christ, but every Christian is to be conformed to the image of Christ, as this passage says: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."(Romans 8:29) This does not refer to superficial imitation, but to a transformation from the inside out—that is, to be conformed to His image, as the original text states. Therefore, every Christian must rely on the Holy Spirit to ultimately be conformed to the image of Christ and to die and live with Christ. He makes it very clear that only in this way can we not nullify God's grace; otherwise, Christ's self-sacrifice for us would have been in vain.

7. We must rely on the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to fullness

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."(Galatians 3:1-9)

Paul's reasoning here regarding the necessity of the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to completion is very clear: since we have entered by the Spirit, it is impossible to be perfected by the flesh. Here again, we can see that Paul's logic is consistently very clear. We know that the suffering that comes from believing in the Lord is for the growth of our life; to avoid suffering would render it all in vain. Of course, the suffering mentioned here does not refer to self-inflicted suffering, for self-inflicted suffering is completely meaningless.

However, the primary purpose of miracles (signs) and wonders is to help a person, at most, take the first step—believing in the Lord's message of grace is what matters most. Just as Paul and Barnabas said when they were in Iconium: "Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands."(Acts 14:3) It is also made very clear here: "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."(Galatians 3:7) The Bible long ago proclaimed the gospel to Abraham, saying, "...All the nations will be blessed in you. ..." (Galatians 3:8) "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."(Galatians 3:9)