

Galatians 1:11-12

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.

Continuing with Paul's letter about the importance of the source of the gospel he carries on a theme of this letter: God is the authority by which all truth and authority in the church are established. Foundationally Paul started the letter off by writing of his apostleship from God and Christ.

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),

Exposition

Galatians 1:11

In verse 11 we see that Paul is addressing the letter to the believers in Galatia and not doubting their salvation; despite any concerns of their current misunderstandings of the gospel he calls them brethren. Paul knows that the message he delivered and that they received was the one and true gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus their brotherly relationship is a word of love and comfort despite Paul's rather intense wording before and after this address.

What is the gospel according to man? What is man's desire for the good news to be? It cannot be comparable to God's plan for salvation. It is not something that we can construct or approve. Mankind's approval of the gospel is not a prerequisite for its goodness. Rejection of the gospel does not invalidate its truth, its source, or its ability to save those who believe. Common elements of man made false gospels:

- Lack of seriousness of sin
- Sufficiency of man
- Ability of works to certify/guarantee/earn salvation
- Limited grace
- Limited god
- Flattery of man¹

The gospel according to God is able to identify a believer with Christ, which is the beginning of a tremendous life; a life that is not lived of the self, but is of God.

Galatians 1:12

Paul's reception of the gospel was part of his claim to its authenticity. If Paul had heard the gospel from men it could be pointed that the authority or authenticity of the source

¹ Galatians, a commentary outline, Chester McCalley, 1988, page 9

was in question; the judaizers might have maligned him for spreading an earthly, false gospel. However, Paul's reception was not from men and furthermore he was not taught it by men. Instead it was given through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Acts 9), which means the type of learning was not susceptible to the corruption that can happen through normal human communication². The use of the phrase, "received from man," which was a formal expression used by the Rabbis and Jewish culture to express their techniques of transmitting religious teaching³. This removes any of the judaizers' immediate leverage to attack Paul and thus his presentation of *the gospel*. The Galatians would have been familiar with Paul's story of how he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, so Paul's reference would not have been simply overlooked.

When we evaluate the gospel message Paul asks us to look at three things:

- The Source
- The Medium
- The Message

For the apostles it can unequivocally be stated that God is the source through the revelation of Christ (Acts 9) or the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) and the message was that all should believe that Christ died, was buried and rose again on the third day for the sins of man (I Cor. 15). In the case of the source the miraculous nature of the sources and medium being confirmed independently was critical in (a logical 'scientific' way). The message remained consistent despite what - if it were human - would have been likely to have variations or contentions.

Questions for Discussion

When we talk about the Christian Life we discuss the importance of the source, why is it so critical that the gospel have the same source as the Life?

Does the believer have the independent revelation of Christ as the source of the gospel for confirmation?

Why is it so critical that a believer understand the concept of faith as one discusses the reliability of the gospel?

What is faith?

What is preaching?

² It should be noted that human communication of truth as given in the Old Testament - more probably by mouth at various stages before Moses - is not absolutely unreliable and it has been shown that in cultures where illiteracy is high most people memorize information more accurately and with a greater focus on repetition of the information before those who knew it before them for correction where needed. On top of this as believers we trust that the Holy Spirit can preserve His word and His message.

³ Galatians, a commentary outline, Chester McCalley, 1988, page 9