

## **"My Gospel ... Is Not Of Man"**

*"For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Gal. 1:11f). These words follow Paul's warning that though he, or an angel from heaven should preach any gospel other than that which he had preached to the Galatians, they would be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). To a group of churches which he had founded, Paul asserts only that which he had previously told them: he preached good news to them because God's own Son had died for their sins and made possible forgiveness for them.

Those who preached a different gospel than Paul were faced with two grave declarations. They were faced with the fact that Paul unhesitatingly said that if any preached a different gospel than he (which they did); they were accursed of God. Next, he states that the gospel he preached was a divine message to him from Jesus Christ. That meant that whatever the Judaizing teachers taught which differed from Paul was not a revelation of Jesus Christ!

In verses 11 and 12 Paul makes two claims about the gospel he preached. First, he assures them the message was not that which originated with man. When Jesus was faced with angry priests who asked, *"By what authority doest thou the things which thou doest, and who gave thee this authority?"* he challenged them by asking, *"The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven or from men?"* (Matt. 21:23, 25). Every religious doctrine or practice must ultimately come under this scrutiny. If a practice or doctrine is from man, it will come to naught (Acts 5:38). Jesus said, *"Every plant which my heavenly father planteth not, shall be rooted up"* (Matt. 15:13). He warns, *"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matt. 15:9). It may be long in coming, but all the works of men will be overthrown. But, if a doctrine or practices comes from God, those who oppose that practice or doctrine are in essence fighting against God. Who can successfully do that? When Peter was questioned regarding his mingling with Cornelius (something Israel was earlier forbidden to do) he justified his actions by declaring God had clearly dictated that *"Gentiles were now clean"* and *"what therefore God hath cleansed, let no man call common or unclean"* (Acts 10:15). To have rebelled against God's doctrine would have placed Peter in the perilous position of standing in opposition to God. His question, *"Who was I that I could withstand God?"*, coupled with definitive evidence that God approved his actions, left his critics with no choice other than to

say, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

There was a second declaration in Paul's warning to the Galatians. "His" gospel was by "*the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Gal. 1:12). Paul's adversaries were faced with the fact that they could not say Paul was inferior to the apostles, that he "misunderstood" them and was to be corrected by them -- Paul lays down the gauntlet: "*I learned nothing from men,*" he says. "*What I taught you was revealed to me by Jesus Christ.*" His opponents could have done one of two things: they could have said Paul's claim to inspiration was false, which would have been in face of the known signs Paul had worked among the Galatians which signs were given to confirm the word (Mark 16:17-20). Or, they could have claimed inspiration themselves, but which "inspiration" was devoid of confirming signs and in complete contradiction to the things Paul taught. Neither alternative was very desirable!

Paul's statement, "*I did not receive it from men*" is compelling evidence that those who say Ananias laid hands on Paul to impart to him the Holy spirit are in error. It is true that Ananias said to Paul, "*Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 9:18). Still, the scriptures make clear these two things were independent matters: Ananias would lay hands on Paul to restore his sight (Acts 9:12), but Jesus would give Paul the Holy Spirit, independent of the hands of man. So said Paul in Galatians 1:12. Paul's inspiration directly from God, placed him on the same plane and level as those apostles who were earlier than he. He was an apostle as they, and spake with the same authority as they!

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