

Galatians

The Unencumbered Gospel of Jesus



Paul's Own Exodus

When Jesus gave Paul his mission to go to the Gentiles, he immediately went to Arabia. Why?

In Galatians 1:15-17, Paul said that after his conversion, he immediately went to Arabia. Did he go there to start a congregation? Get support for his ministry? Or can we even know?

One hint may come from the only other mention of Arabia in the New Testament, and it happens to be right here in the letter to the Galatians in chapter 4. In Galatians 4:21-31, Paul gives an allegory to compare the Law and its adherents to the New Covenant and the disciples. He writes in verse 25 that Hagar in the allegory “is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem.”

So what did Paul do before starting his ministry? He stood where Moses stood on Sinai to kick off his own personal Exodus from Law to grace.



The Origin of Paul's Gospel

Did Paul receive his Law-free gospel from man or God?



Paul, the Chief Sinner

What is it about the gospel that radically changed Paul?



Preaching Him

What did Paul mean when he wrote that he was called to “preach Him?”

Galatians 1:11-24

The second half of Galatians 1 answers some questions about the origin of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles.

In 1 Timothy 1, Paul called himself the foremost of all sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Whether he was speaking literally or was embellishing a bit I will leave up to you, but the point is simple: if God could save someone like Paul, then you and I have a shot!

Paul explained, "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost sinner Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life" (1 Timothy 1:16).

God's love for you is greater than any sin you could ever commit, and His love is unconditional. Paul wrote in Romans 5 that God loved us even when we were sinners, unrighteous, and were acting like His enemies!

Even Paul, who persecuted the church



“Who called me through His grace...”

relentlessly, was called by God's grace (Galatians 1:15).

If it can happen to Paul, it can happen to you. But guess what. If it can happen to both Paul and you, then God can save your neighbor, your worst enemy, and the most unsuspecting person.

Our job is to preach Jesus and get out of the way. We may plant or water, but it is God who gives the increase.

CALLED OR COERCED?

Paul mentioned several times that people are called by the gospel. There is a difference between being called and coerced.

In John 12:32, Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." Jesus didn't say He would drag or drive people to Himself but that He would draw.

True conversion doesn't come through fear, scare tactics, or anything like that; it comes from love. Perfect love, we are told, casts out fears. Paul told the Corinthians that he felt controlled by the love of Christ. The gospel really is God's power to save! It's good news!

