

# GALATIANS

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

The persons to whom this epistle is written were not such who made up a single church only, in some certain town or city, but were such of which several churches consisted, in a region or country called Galatia, as is evident from (~~ROM~~Galatians 1:2) and the members of these churches seem to be chiefly, if not altogether Jews, since the apostle includes them with himself; as having been under the law, under tutors and governors, and in bondage under the elements of the world, and to whom the law had been a schoolmaster, though now they were no longer under it as such, (~~ROM~~Galatians 3:23-25 4:1-3) or however, though some of them might have been originally Gentiles, yet, previous to their conversion, had become proselytes to the Jews, and now were returning to Judaism again, as appears from (~~ROM~~Galatians 4:8-10). When and from whence this epistle was written, is not very clear and manifest: some have thought, that it was written about the time of the writing of the epistle to the Romans, and upon a like occasion; but if it was written about that time, it could not be written from Rome, as the subscription to this epistle attests, since it is certain, that when the apostle wrote his epistle to the Romans, he had never, as yet, been at Rome. Beza is of opinion, that it was written from Antioch, between the return of Paul and Barnabas thither from their first journey, and the troubles which broke out in that church, (~~ACTS~~Acts 14:28). But to this it is reasonably objected, that it is questionable whether there were so early any churches in Galatia at all; and if there were, it does not seem that the defection from the faith, complained of in this epistle, as yet had took place in any of the churches; for it was after this date that the troubles upon this head arose at Antioch, which seems to have been the first place, and the church there the first church the judaizing teachers practised at and upon. Some Latin exemplars testify that it was written from Ephesus; of which opinion was Erasmus; but as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the same reason is against this as the former, seeing the corruption that was got into this church was then but beginning, when the apostle was at Ephesus: it seems therefore most likely, that it was written from Rome, as the subscription in the Greek copies affirms; and which is

strengthened by the Syriac and Arabic versions, seeing it seems to have been written after the apostle had made the collections, in several places, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, (~~4820~~ Galatians 2:10) and when the apostasy from the faith had got to a great pitch; nor is it any objection that there is no express mention made of his bonds in it, as there is in those epistles of his, which were written from Rome; since, when he wrote this, he might have been delivered from them, as some have thought he was after his first defence; and besides, he does take notice of the marks of the Lord Jesus he bore in his body, (~~4867~~ Galatians 6:17). Dr. Lightfoot places the writing of this epistle in the year and in the “fifth” of Nero; some place it in 55, and others in 58. That there were churches in Galatia very early, is certain from (~~44823~~ Acts 18:23, ~~4601~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1) but by whom they were planted is not so evident; very likely by the apostle, since, it is certain, both from this epistle, that he was personally in this country, and preached the Gospel here, (~~48043~~ Galatians 4:13-15) and from (~~44465~~ Acts 16:6) and if he was not the instrument of the conversion of the first of them, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church state, yet it is certain, that he was useful in strengthening the disciples and brethren throughout this country, (~~44823~~ Acts 18:23). But after his departure from them, the false teachers got among them, and insinuated, that he was no apostle, at least that he was inferior to Peter, James, and John, the ministers of the circumcision; and these seduced many of the members of the churches in this place, drawing them off from the evangelical doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, persuading them that the observation of the ceremonial law, particularly circumcision, was necessary to their acceptance with God, and justification in his sight: wherefore the occasion and design of this epistle were to vindicate the character of the apostle as such; to establish the true doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the works of the law; to recover those who were carried away with the other doctrines; to exhort the saints to stand fast in the liberty of Christ, and to various other duties of religion; and to give a true description of the false teachers, and their views, that so they might beware of them, and of their principles.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the apostle's usual salutation of the persons he writes to, and the charge he brought against them for their fickleness and inconstancy, in showing any manner of disposition towards a removal from the Gospel; the truth, certainty, and authority of the Gospel, and an account of himself, who was a preacher of it; of his life before conversion; of the nature and manner of his conversion; of his travels, labors, and usefulness afterwards. The inscription is in (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:1,2) in which the writer of the epistle is described by his name Paul, and by his office, an apostle; which office he had not of men, but of God, of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and of God the Father, who is described by his power in raising Christ from the dead. The persons to whom the epistle is inscribed are the churches of Galatia, and those that joined the apostle in the salutation of them were the brethren that were with him. The salutation follows, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:3) in which mention being made of Christ, there is a declaration of a singular benefit by him, which contains the sum of the Gospel, as that he gave himself for the sins of his people, to deliver them from the present evil world, according to the will of God, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:4) upon which a doxology, or an ascription of glory is made, either to Christ, who gave himself, or to the Father, according to whose will he did, or to both, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:5). After which the apostle proceeds to exhibit a charge of levity against the Galatians; and which he expresses in a way of admiration, that they should so soon be carried away from the doctrine of grace, to another doctrine the reverse of it, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:6) though he somewhat mitigates this reproof by laying the blame on the false teachers, who were troublers of them, and perverters of the Gospel of Christ; and corrects himself for calling their false doctrine by the name of another Gospel, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:7) and delivers out, and pronounces an anathema on all such, whether angels or men, that should preach any other Gospel than he had preached, and they had received, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians 1:8,9). The excellency of which Gospel is set forth, by the matter of it, being not human but divine, and by the manner of preaching it, with all simplicity and honesty, not seeking to please men, (~~<BOOK>~~Galatians

1:10) and from the efficient cause of it, it being denied to be after man, or received from, or taught by man, but is ascribed to the revelation of Christ Jesus, (~~8011~~Galatians 1:11,12). And that the apostle had it not from men, he proves by the account of himself, and his conversation before conversion, as how that he had been a persecutor of the church of God, of those that professed the Christian religion and doctrine; wherefore he could not have the Gospel, as not from nature and education, so not from the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, who encouraged him to persecute, (~~8013~~Galatians 1:13). And this he further makes to appear by his great proficiency in the religion of the Jews, and his abundant zeal for the traditions of the fathers, which set him at the greatest distance from, and opposition to, the Gospel of Christ, (~~8014~~Galatians 1:14). And, on the other hand, that he received it of God, and by the revelation of Christ, he proves by the account he gives of his effectual calling and conversion; the source and spring of which was the sovereign will of God in divine predestination, and the moving cause of it, the free grace of God, (~~8015~~Galatians 1:15). The manner in which this was done was by a revelation of Christ in him; and the end of it was, that he might preach Christ to the Gentiles, which he immediately did, without consulting flesh and blood, (~~8016~~Galatians 1:16). And as it was a clear point that he could never receive the Gospel from the Jews before his conversion, he and they being enemies to it, and persecutors of it; so it was evident that he did not receive it, after his conversion, even from Christian men, seeing he did not, upon his conversion, go directly to Jerusalem, and confer with the apostles there, who were the most likely persons to have taught him the Gospel; but instead of this he went into Arabia preaching the Gospel, and then came back to Damascus, where he was converted, (~~8017~~Galatians 1:17). And it was three years after his conversion, that he went to Jerusalem to visit Peter; and his stay with him was very short, no longer than fifteen days; and he was the only apostle he saw there, excepting James, the brother of Christ, (~~8018~~Galatians 1:18,19) for the truth of all which he appeals to God the searcher of hearts, (~~8020~~Galatians 1:20). And then goes on with the account of himself, and his travels; how that when he departed from Jerusalem, he did not go into any other parts of Judea, and visit the churches there, but went into the countries of Syria and Cilicia; and was not so much as known by thee, or personally, by any of the churches, or members of the churches in Judea, (~~8021~~Galatians 1:20,21) so that as it could not be thought by his short stay at Jerusalem, and the few apostles he saw there, that he received the Gospel he preached from them, so neither from any other ministers, or body of Christians in the land of

Judea; for all they knew of him was by hearsay only, as that he who was formerly a persecutor of them, was now become a preacher of the Gospel he had sought to destroy, (~~4012~~Galatians 1:22,23) wherefore it was a clear case he had not received the Gospel from them. Besides, as they had heard that he preached the Gospel of Christ, they glorified God for it, who had revealed it to him, and bestowed gifts upon him, fitting him for such service, (~~4012~~Galatians 1:24).

**Ver. 1.** *Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man*, etc..] The writer of this epistle, Paul, puts his name to it, as to all his epistles, excepting that to the Hebrews, if that be his, being neither afraid nor ashamed to own what is herein contained. He asserts himself to be “an apostle”, which was the highest office in the church, to which he was immediately called by Christ, and confirmed in it by signs and wonders. This he chose to mention, because of the false teachers, who had insinuated he was no apostle, and not to be regarded; whereas he had received grace and apostleship from Christ, and was an apostle, “not of men”, as were the apostles or messengers of the sanhedrim <sup>fl</sup>; (See Gill on “~~4083~~2 Corinthians 8:23”) and as were the false apostles, who were sent out by men, who had no authority to send them forth: the apostle, as he did not take this honour to himself, did not thrust himself into this office, or run before he was sent; so he was not sent by men; he did not act upon human authority, or by an human commission: this is said in opposition to the false apostles, and to an unlawful investiture with the office of apostleship, and an usurpation of it, as well as to distinguish himself from the messengers and ambassadors of princes, who are sent with credentials by them to negotiate civil affairs for them in foreign courts, he being an ambassador of Christ; and from the messengers of churches, who were sometimes sent with assistance or advice to other churches; and he moreover says, “nor by man”; by a mere man, but by one that was more than a man; nor by a mortal man, but by Christ, as raised from the dead, immortal and glorious at God’s right hand: or rather the sense is, he was not chosen into the office of apostleship by the suffrages of men, as Matthias was; or he was not ordained an apostle in the manner the ordinary ministers of the Gospel and pastors are, by the churches of Christ; so that as the former clause is opposed to an unlawful call of men, this is opposed to a lawful one; and shows him to be not an ordinary minister, but an extraordinary one, who was called to this office, not mediately by men, by any of the churches as common ministers are:

*but by Jesus Christ*; immediately, without the intervention of men, as appears from (~~4016~~ Acts 26:16-18). For what Ananias did upon his conversion was only putting his hands on him to recover his sight, and baptizing him; it was Christ that appeared to him personally, and made him a minister; and his separation with Barnabas, by the church, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, (~~4413~~ Acts 13:2,4) was to some particular work and service to be done by them, and not to apostleship, and which was long after Paul was made an apostle by Christ. Jesus Christ being here opposed to man, does not suggest that he was not a man, really and truly, for he certainly was; he partook of the same flesh and blood with us, and was in all things made like unto us, sin excepted; but that he was not a mere man, he was truly God as well as man; for as the raising him from the dead, in the next clause, shows him to be a man, or he could not have died; so his being opposed to man, and set in equality with God the Father, in this verse, and grace and peace being prayed for from him, as from the Father, (~~4014~~ Galatians 1:4) and the same glory ascribed to him as to the Father, (~~4015~~ Galatians 1:5) prove him to be truly and properly God. The apostle adds,

*and God the Father*; Christ and his Father being of the same nature and essence, power and authority, as they are jointly concerned and work together in the affairs of nature and Providence, so in those of grace; and particularly in constituting and ordaining apostles, and setting them in the church. This serves the more to confirm the divine authority under which Paul acted as an apostle, being not only made so by Christ, but also by God the Father, who is described as he,

*who raised him from the dead*; which is observed, not so much to express the divine power of the Father, or the glory of Christ, as raised from the dead, but to strengthen the validity of the apostle's character and commission as such; to whom it might have been objected, that he had not seen Christ in the flesh, nor familiarly conversed with him, as the rest of the apostles did: to which he was able to reply, that he was not called to be an apostle by Christ in his low and mean estate of humiliation, but by him after he was raised from the dead, and was set down at the right hand of God; who personally appeared to him in his glory, and was seen by him, and who made and appointed him his apostle, to bear his name before Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel; so that his call to apostleship was rather more grand and illustrious than that of any of the other apostles.

**Ver. 2.** *And all the brethren which are with me*, etc..] Meaning either the brethren of the church where he was when he wrote this epistle, who were children of the same Father, regenerated by the same grace, belonged to the same family and household of God, and were heirs together of the grace of life; or else his fellow ministers, who were assisting to him in his work, and were companions with him in his travels, and whom he sometimes mentions by name and joins with him in his epistles, as Sosthenes, Silvanus, and Timothy; and the rather he takes notice of the brethren here, whoever are meant, to show that they agreed with him in the doctrines of grace he defends, and in the charges he brought against this church, and in the reproofs and advice he gave them; which he might suppose, and hope, would have the greater weight and influence upon them;

*unto the churches of Galatia*; Galatia was a country in the lesser Asia, inhabited by the Gauls, who coming thither out of Europe, mixed with the Grecians; whence it was first called Gallo Graecia, and afterwards Galatia; (See Gill on "~~41816~~ Acts 16:6"). The metropolis of it, as Pliny <sup>f2</sup> says, was formerly Gordium, and the chief towns or cities, according to him, were Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus; and in some, or all of these places, it is very probable, were the churches here mentioned; (See Gill on "~~41823~~ Acts 18:23"). It seems there were more than one in this country; for the primitive churches were not national nor provincial, but congregational, consisting of persons called out of the world, and joined together in holy fellowship and who walked in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord: and though these churches had many among them that were disorderly, and were swerving from the faith of the Gospel, yet were not unchurched, but honoured still with the name of churches, there being no perfection to be expected in this state of things; as not in particular persons, so not in congregated bodies and societies; though it is observed by some, that they are barely called churches, without any additional epithets, as churches of God, beloved of God, called to be saints, faithful and sanctified in Christ, which are bestowed on other churches; whereby the apostle is thought to show his indignation and resentment at their principles and practices. For quickly after the Gospel was preached unto them, false teachers crept in among them, endeavouring to subvert it, by mixing it with the law, and joining Moses and Christ; and in which they very much succeeded; and is the reason of the apostle's writing this epistle.

**Ver. 3.** *Grace to be you*, etc..] After the inscription above, in which the writer of the epistle, and the persons joined to him, are described, and the churches to whom it is written, follows the salutation in these words, and which is common to all the epistles of this apostle; of the sense of which, (see Gill on “~~ROU~~Romans 1:7”). The Alexandrian copy reads, “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ”; and the Ethiopic version reads, “our Father”.

**Ver. 4.** *Who gave himself for our sins*, etc..] The antecedent to the relative “who, is our Lord Jesus Christ”, (~~ROU~~Galatians 1:3) and the words are an illustration of the good will of God the Father, and of the grace and love of Christ, in the gift of himself, for the sins of his people: he did not merely give, “sua, his own things”, what were his properly, but, “se, himself”; not the world, and the fulness of it, gold, silver, and such like corruptible things; no, nor men for them, and people for their lives; nor angels, his creatures, and ministering spirits; but his own self, his life, his flesh, his blood, his body, and soul, his whole human nature, and this as in union with himself, a divine person, the eternal Son of God. He gave himself freely, cheerfully, voluntarily, into the hands of men, justice, and death itself, as a sacrifice for sin, to expiate it, make reconciliation and atonement for it, which could not be done by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; to procure the remission of it, which could not be had without shedding or blood; and utterly to take it away, finish it, and make an end of it, and abolish it, so as that it might never rise any more to the condemnation of his people: and this reached to “sins” of all sorts, not only original, but actual, and these of thought, word, and deed; and this oblation of himself upon the cross, was not for any sin of his own, who had none, nor for the sins of angels, of whom he was no Redeemer aud Saviour, but “for our sins”; not the sins of the apostles, or of the Jews only, nor yet of all mankind, but of God's elect, called the friends of Christ, his sheep and church, for whom he gave himself; and his end in so doing was,

*that he might deliver us from this present evil world*; by which is meant, either the Jewish world, or church state, in which were a worldly sanctuary, and which were subject to ceremonies and traditions, called the elements and rudiments of the world; and who were possessed of worldly notions, and in expectation of a worldly kingdom to be set up by the Messiah; and both in principle and in practice were sadly degenerated, and were become very evil and wicked: or the present age and generation of men, whether of Jews or Gentiles, which was so corrupt, as the like was



never known; or in general the present world, and the men of it, in distinction either from the world before the flood, as in (~~GENE~~ 2 Peter 3:5-7) or rather from the new heavens and earth, which will be after the present ones, and wherein will dwell righteousness; or, in a word, from the world which is to come, as they are frequently opposed in Scripture: and which is said to be “evil”, not with respect to the matter, that being all very good, as created by God; but with respect to the men of it, who lie in wickedness, under the power of the wicked one, and of their own sins; and to the things which are in it, all which are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Now Christ gave himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, that as in consequence of this they might be delivered and saved from the damning power, so from the governing power and influence of all that is evil in this present world; as from Satan, the god of it, who has usurped a power over it; from the lusts that are predominant in it; from the vain conversation of the men of it; from the general conflagration of it at the last day, and from the perdition of ungodly men, and their eternal destruction in hell: and all this is

*according to the will of God, and our Father*, It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that Christ was delivered up into the hands of wicked men, and put to death by them; it was his will of purpose and decree, to deliver him up into the hands of justice and death, and that he should give himself sacrifice for sin; yea, it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his sheep, to which he was obedient; it was his pleasure, it was what was agreeable to him, was to his good liking, that he should die for the sins of his people; it was owing to the love of God, who is our Father in Christ, and by adopting grace, and not to any worth or desert of ours, that Christ gave himself for us; as his own love, so his Father's will, were what solely moved him to it.

**Ver. 5.** *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*] That is, either to Christ, who gave himself to expiate the sins of his people, on the account of which all honour and glory are due to him from them; or to God the Father, according to whose will of purpose and command Christ gave himself, for which glory ought to be ascribed unto him; and it may well be thought, that both are taken into this doxology: the Father is to be glorified, who of his everlasting love, and free favour, did in his eternal purposes and decrees in his counsel and covenant, so wisely frame and order things, that his own Son should be given to be an offering for sin; and Christ is to be glorified, that he, of his free rich grace and love, agreed

to give himself, and did give himself to be a ransom for his people, which has been testified in due time. This ascription of glory to both shows the greatness of the blessing, and the grateful sense which all interested in it ought to bear upon their minds continually, “for ever and ever”; or “to the ages of ages”, a Jewish phrase, the same with *ym̄l [ yml [ l ]*<sup>f3</sup>. To which the apostle adds his “Amen”, as joining with all the saints, above or below, in ascribing salvation, and the glory of it, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

**Ver. 6.** *I marvel that ye are so soon removed*, etc..] The apostle now enters on the subject matter of this epistle, and opens the occasion and design of it, which were to reprove the Galatians for their instability in the Gospel; and, if possible, to reclaim them, who were removed, or removing from the simplicity of it; and which was very surprising to the apostle, who had entertained a good opinion of them, looked upon them as persons called by the grace of God, well established in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in no danger of being carried away with the error of the wicked the person from whom he says they were removed is,

*from him that called you into the grace of Christ*; by whom is meant, not the apostle himself, who had been an instrument in the calling of them to the knowledge of Christ, and the participation of his grace, and from whose Gospel, or the Gospel as preached by him, in its clearness and purity, they were now departing; but either Christ, and so the Syriac and Arabic versions read the words, “from Christ who called you by own grace”; or rather God the Father, and some copies read, “into”, or “by the grace of God”: to whom calling is most commonly ascribed in the sacred writings: and which is to be understood, not of a ministerial call, or a call to preach the Gospel of Christ; though there might be some in these churches who were called both internally and externally to that sacred office; nor a mere outward call by the ministry: for though doubtless there might be some among them who were only so called, yet as much as they were under profession of Christ, and nothing appearing to the contrary, they were all in a judgment of charity looked upon as effectually called by the grace of God; which calling is here meant: for they were called “into the grace of Christ”; some read it, “in”, or “by the grace of Christ”: referring it either to the moving cause of calling, which is not the works and merits of men, but the free grace and favour of God in Christ; or to the efficient cause of it, which is not the power and will of man, but the efficacious grace of Christ, through the powerful operations of his Spirit:

but the words are well rendered, “into the grace of Christ”; that is, to the enjoyment of the fulness of grace which is in Christ; of all the blessings of grace he has in his hands; such as justification, peace, pardon, atonement, wisdom, strength, joy, comfort, and every supply of grace; and particularly fellowship with him, into which the saints are called, and than which nothing is more desirable: but the difficulty is, how such persons can be said to be removed from God, who has thus called them to partake of grace in Christ. They are not, nor can they be removed from the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to them in Christ, of which their calling is a fruit, effect, and evidence; nor from their covenant interest in him, which is immovable and inviolable; nor from a state of justification, in which they openly are, who in the effectual calling have passed from death to life, and so shall never enter into condemnation; nor from the family and household of God, in which they are; no, nor from the grace of calling with which they are called by God, and which has eternal salvation inseparably connected with it; but this must be understood doctrinally of their removal from the Gospel of Christ, though not of a total and final one. It is observed by some, that the word used is in the present tense, and shows that they were not gone off from the Gospel, but were upon going, so that the apostle had some hopes, yea, confidence of their being restored, (~~415D~~ Galatians 5:10). And besides, though such as are truly called by grace cannot be finally and totally deceived by false prophets and false teachers, yet they may be greatly unhinged by them, and may fall from some degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, which was the case of these Galatians: but what increased the apostle's surprise, and aggravated their sin and weakness, was, that they were “so soon” removed from the simplicity of the Gospel; he having been with them but a few years before, and preached the Gospel to them, which the means of their conversion, and of planting churches among them; at least he had lately paid them a visit, when he afresh strengthened them in the faith of the Gospel, (~~418B~~ Acts 18:23). Or this may regard that easiness of mind which appeared in them, who upon the first attack of them by the false teachers, were weakly and cowardly giving up their faith, and at once giving into the notions of these men, as soon as they were proposed unto them. That which they are said to be removed

*unto* is

*another Gospel*, different from that, and very unlike to what had been preached to them, and they had received; which had nothing of the grace of

Christ, of the doctrines and blessings of grace that had, by which they were called; very different from the Gospel of Christ, and his apostles, insomuch that it did not deserve the name of a Gospel; and the apostle calls it so, not that he thought it to be one, but because it was in the opinion of others, and was so styled by the false apostles; wherefore, by way of concession, he so calls it, though he immediately corrects it.

**Ver. 7.** *Which is not another*, etc..] It is no Gospel, no joyful sound, no good news, and glad tidings; the doctrine which attributes justification to the works of the law, or mixes grace and works in the business of salvation, which was the doctrine of these false teachers, is no Gospel; not truly so, however it may be called; nor does it bring any solid peace and joy to distressed minds. There is but one pure Gospel of the grace of God, and Christ, and his apostles; there is not one and another; there is but one faith, one doctrine and scheme of faith; the Gospel is single and uniform, all of a piece, has no yea and nay, or contradiction in it; this trumpet gives no uncertain sound, nor any dreadful, but a joyful one:

*but there be some that trouble you*; meaning the false apostles, whose names he does not think fit to mention, as being unworthy to be named, and to have their names transmitted to posterity. These troubled the churches with their doctrines and principles, by raising disputes and controversies among them, injecting doubts and scruples into their minds, which puzzled and confounded them, and made them uneasy, and which broke in upon that peace of soul which the Gospel brings and establishes; for no true solid peace is attained to, and enjoyed, but by the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, which the doctrine of justification by works, etc.. tends to destroy.

*And would pervert the Gospel of Christ*; which has Christ for its author, subject, and preacher; and particularly the doctrine of justification by his righteousness, which they sought to change, to throw into a different shape and form, to adulterate by mixing it with the works of the law, and so, if possible, destroy it: to this they showed a good will, but were not able to effect, for the Gospel is an everlasting one; it is immovable, and so is that particular doctrine of it; it remains, and will remain in spite of opposition to it. Thus the apostle prudently lays the blame of the Galatians removing from the Gospel to another upon the false teachers, hoping he should be able to reclaim them by solid arguments, and gentle methods.

**Ver. 8.** *But though we, or an angel from heaven,* etc..] The apostle, in order to assert the more strongly the truth, purity, and perfection of the Gospel, as preached by him; and to deter persons from preaching another Gospel, and others from receiving it, supposes a case impossible; and, in such a case, denounces his anathemas. It was not possible, that he, or any of his fellow apostles, who had been so clearly led and so fully established in the Gospel of Christ, and of which they had had such a powerful and comfortable experience in their souls, could ever preach one different from it; nor was it possible that a good angel, one that is in heaven, that always beholds the face of God there, is ever ready to do his will, as he never could be employed by God in publishing another, so he never would; and yet, was it possible or such a thing to be done by such men, or such an angel, he or they would deserve the curse of God and men; their having the highest names, or being of the highest character, and in the highest office and class of beings, would not screen them; and therefore how should the false apostles, and those who followed them, ever think to escape, since even these would not, should they

*preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you;* that is, not only anyone that is contrary to it, but any one besides it; for such was the perfection of the Gospel, as preached by the apostle, who declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that was profitable to the churches, that no addition could, or might be made unto it:

*let him be accursed,* or “anathema”; (see ~~4162~~ 1 Corinthians 16:22) which may respect his excommunication out of the church, and his sentence of condemnation by Christ at the last day; and the sense be this, let him be ejected from the ministry of the word, degraded from his office, and cast out of the church; let him be no more a minister, nor a member of it; and let him be abhorred of men, and accursed of Christ; let him hear the awful sentence, “go ye accursed”, etc..

**Ver. 9.** *As we have said before, so say I now again,* etc..] Either when he first preached the Gospel among them; or rather referring to what he had just now said, which he repeats with some little alteration; as if any, men, or angels, be they of what name, figure, rank, or office whatever,

*preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received;* and as the apostle thought, readily, willingly, sincerely, and heartily, in the love of it; assenting to the truth, feeling the power of it, and openly professing it:

*let him be accursed*; which he repeats, for the more solemn asseveration and confirmation of it; and to show that this did not drop from his lips hastily and inadvertently; nor did it proceed from any irregular passions, or was spoken by him in heat, and in an angry mood, his mind being ruffled, disturbed, and discomposed; but was said by him in the most serious and solemn manner, upon the most thoughtful and mature consideration of the affair.

**Ver. 10.** *For do I now persuade men, or God?* etc..] To “persuade”, is to teach; (see <sup>41804</sup>Acts 18:4, <sup>47511</sup>2 Corinthians 5:11) the sense of which, with respect to men, is easy, but, with regard to God, difficult; and indeed cannot be applied to him, consistent with his divine perfections; and therefore something must be understood, and which may be supplied either thus, “do I now persuade”, you or others, that “men or God” are to be hearkened to? not men, but God; the apostle did not teach them to hearken either to himself, or any of the other apostles, Peter, James, and John, any further than as he and they preached the pure Gospel of Christ; but should they do otherwise, they were not to be attended to, but God, who spake by his Son; or Christ, who is God as well as man; who is the great prophet in the church, a son in his own house, whose voice is to be hearkened to in all matters of doctrine, worship, and duty: or thus, “do I now persuade” you, to obey “men or God”; not men, but God; he did not teach them to regard the traditions of the elders, or to obey the commandments of men, but, on the contrary, the ordinances of Christ, who is the one Lord, and only master, whose orders are to be observed: or thus, “do I now persuade”, to trust in “men or God?” to believe in the one or the other; not in men, in the wisdom, strength, riches, and righteousness of men, but in the living God; in the grace of God, and in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: or thus, “do I persuade” for the sake of “men, or God?” not for the sake of gaining honour, glory, and applause from men, as the Pharisees and false apostles did, but for the glory of God, the hour of Christ, and the good of immortal souls: or else not persons, but things are meant, by men and God: and the sense is, that the apostle taught and persuaded men to believe, not things human, but divine; he did not preach himself, or seek to set up his own power and authority over men; or set forth his eloquence, learning, parts, and abilities; or to gain either applause or riches to himself; he did not teach human wisdom, the vain philosophy of the Gentiles, and opposition of science, falsely so called; nor the traditions of the elders, nor the commandments of men; nor the power and purity human nature, or the

righteousness of man: but delivered things divine; he persuaded to things concerning God, and the kingdom of God; (see ~~440B~~ Acts 19:8) he taught, that without the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God, no man should see, and without the justifying righteousness of Christ, no man should enter into the kingdom of heaven, as his Lord had done before him; he preached the things concerning the grace and love of God, the person and offices of Christ, and the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification: the word "now", refers to all the time since his conversion, to the present: before his call by grace, he persuaded persons to hearken to men, to obey the traditions of the elders, to trust in their own righteousness for justification before God; but now he saw otherwise, and taught them to lay aside everything that was human, and to believe in God, trust in and depend on his justifying righteousness; and this he did, without any regard to the favour and affection of men, as appears from what follows:

*or do I seek to please men?* no, he neither pleased, nor sought to please them; neither in the matter of his ministry, which was the grace of God, salvation by a crucified Christ, and the things of the Spirit of God; for these were very distasteful to, and accounted foolishness by the men of the world; nor in the manner of it, which was not with excellency of speech, or the enticing words of man's wisdom, with the flowers of rhetoric, but in a plain and simple style. There is indeed a pleasing of men, which is right, and which the apostle elsewhere recommends, and was in the practice of himself; (see ~~451D~~ Romans 15:2, ~~460B~~ 1 Corinthians 10:33). This proceeds from right principles, by proper ways and means, and to right ends, the glory of God, the good, profit, edification, and salvation of men; and there is a pleasing of men that is wrong, which is done by dropping, concealing, or corrupting the doctrines of the Gospel, to gain the affection and applause of men, and amass wealth to themselves, as the false apostles did, and who are here tacitly struck at; a practice the apostle could by no means come into, and assigns this reason for it:

*for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ:* formerly he had studied to please men, when he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen, made havoc of the church, hating men and women to prison; and went to the high priest, and asked letters of him to go to Damascus, and persecute the followers of Christ, thereby currying favour with him; but now it was otherwise, and he suggests, that was this his present temper and conduct he should have continued a Pharisee still, and have never entered into the service of Christ; for to please men, and be a servant of Christ, are

things inconsistent, incompatible, and impracticable; no man pleaser can be a true faithful servant of Christ, or deserve the name of one: the apostle here refers to his office as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the Gospel, and not to his character as a private believer, in which sense every Christian is a servant of Christ; though to men is even contrary to this; for no man can serve two masters, God and the world, Christ and men. The Septuagint version of (~~Ps~~ Psalm 53:5) is, “for God hath scattered the bones”, **ανθρωπαρεσκων**, “of men pleasers”, to which agree the Syriac and Arabic versions.

**Ver. 11.** *But I certify you, brethren*, etc..] Though the Galatians had gone such lengths with their false teachers, yet the apostle still calls them “brethren”; as hoping well of them, that they were born of God, did belong to his family, and were heirs of the grace of life; and this he the rather makes use of, to show his affection to them, and to engage their attention to the assurance he gives, of the divine original and authority of the Gospel preached by him; which though they formerly knew and believed, yet through the insinuations of the false apostles, were drawn into some doubts about it: wherefore he declares in the most solemn and affectionate manner,

*that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.* Their guides that were leading them wrong, did not presume to say, that the Gospel was after man, for they themselves pretended to preach the Gospel; but that the Gospel preached by the apostle had no other authority than human, or than his own to support it: wherefore he denies that it was “after man”; after the wisdom of man, an human invention and contrivance, a device and fiction of man's brain; nor was it after the mind of man, or agreeably to his carnal reason, it was disapproved of by him, and beyond his capacity to reach it; nor was it of his revealing, a discovery of his; flesh and blood, human nature, could never have revealed it; nor is it in the power of one man to make another a minister of the Gospel, or to give him or himself success in the ministration of it, but the whole is of God.

**Ver. 12.** *For I neither received it of man*, etc..] Not from Gamaliel, at whose feet he was brought up; he received the law from him, and knowledge in the Jews' religion, and in the traditions of the elders, but not a whit of the Gospel; on the contrary, he received prejudices against it from him, or was strengthened in them by him; no, nor from the apostles of Christ neither, whom he saw not, had no conversation with for some years,



after he was a preacher of the Gospel, and therefore did not receive it at their hands; no, nor from Ananias, nor any other man:

*neither was I taught it:* that is, by man; he did not learn it of men, as men learn law, physics, logic, rhetoric, natural philosophy, and other things at school:

*but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;* meaning, not through Christ being revealed to him by the Father, as in (<sup><8016></sup>Galatians 1:16) though it is a sense not to be overlooked; but by Christ, the revealer of it to him; and regards either the time of his rapture into the third heaven, when he heard words not to be uttered; or rather since that is not so certain when it was, the time of his conversion, when Christ personally appeared unto him, and made him a minister of his Gospel; and immediately from himself, without the interposition, or use of any man, or means, gave him such light into it, and such a furniture of mind for the preaching of it, that he directly, as soon as ever he was baptized, set about the ministration of it, to the admiration of the saints, and confusion of the enemies of Christ. These words furnish out another proof of the deity of Christ; for if the Gospel is not after man, nor received of, or taught by man, but by Christ, then Christ cannot be a mere man, or else being by him, it would be by man; and which also confirms the authority and validity of the Gospel, and carries in it a strong reason for the apostle's anathematizing all such as preach any other.

**Ver. 13.** *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past,* etc..] His manner and course of life, in his state of unregeneracy, how diametrically opposite his education and behaviour, his principles and practices, were to the Gospel; which show that he had not received it, nor was he taught it of men. This they might have heard of, either from himself, when he first preached among them, who was very free to acknowledge his former sins and errors; or from the Jews, who were scattered abroad in the several countries; and it may be, from them, who were forced to fly to strange cities, and perhaps to some in Galatia, on account of his persecution: now his life and conversation, before his conversion, were spent

*in the Jews' religion;* or “in Judaism”. He was born of Jewish parents, had a Jewish education, was brought up under a Jewish doctor, in all the peculiarities of the Jewish religion, and so could have received no hints, not in a notional way, of the truths of the Gospel; which he might have done, had he been born of Christian parents, and had had a Christian education: besides, he was brought up in the religion of the Jews, not as it was

founded and established by God, but as it was corrupted by them; who had lost the true sense of the oracles of God committed to them, the true use of sacrifices, and the end of the law; had added to it a load of human traditions; placed all religion in bare doing, and taught that justification and salvation lay in the observance of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders: add to this, that he was brought up in the sect of the Jewish religion, Pharisaism, which was the straitest sect of it, and the most averse to Christ and his Gospel; so that he could never receive it, or have any disposition to it from hence; so far from it, that he appeals to the Galatians, as what they must have heard,

*how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God*; which he now knew, and believed to be the church of God; though then he did not, but rather a synagogue of Satan; and this he mentions, as an aggravation of his sin, under a sense of which he was humbled all his days: when he is said to persecute it “beyond measure”, the meaning is not, as if there were any lawful measure, or due bounds of persecution, but that he persecuted the saints in a most violent and outrageous manner, beyond all others that were concerned with him: the church of God at Jerusalem is particularly designed, and the members of it, the disciples of Christ; whom he hated, and committed to prison, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against, and destroyed: wherefore it follows, and wasted it; or destroyed it; as much as in him lay, he sought to do it, though he was not able to effect it entirely; he made havoc of it, dispersed its members, caused them to flee to strange cities, persecuted them to death, gave his voice against them to have them punished and put to death: such an aversion had he to the followers of Christ, and the Christian doctrine.

**Ver. 14.** *And profited in the Jews' religion*, etc..] Or “in Judaism”; and the more he did so, or was versed in, and wedded to their principles, the more violent a persecutor he was. He was under a very considerable master, Gamaliel, a Rabbi of great note among the Jews; and he himself a youth of uncommon natural abilities, so that his proficiency in Jewish learning was very great; even, as he says,

*above many my equals in mine own nation*: not proselytes in other nations, but such as were natives of his own country: or were “in his own kindred”, his near relations, who were his contemporaries, of the same age with him; and very modestly he says “many”, not “all”:

*being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers:* he had a zeal, but, not according to knowledge; and a greater degree of it than the rest of his countrymen; and that not so much for the written law delivered to his fathers, as for the oral law, the traditions and customs of his ancestors; which had been handed down, as they pretended, from one to another, and were now swelled to an almost infinite bulk; and mean the traditions of the elders, condemned by Christ, as making void the commandments of God: now his close attachment to, and eager zeal for these traditions, put him upon using more violent measures in persecuting the saints, and further off from the Gospel of Christ: and now from this account of himself it is a clear point, that during this period of his life he could never have received the Gospel from men, which is his view in giving it.

**Ver. 15.** *But when it pleased God,* etc..] Here begins his account of his conversion, and call to the ministry; all which he ascribes entirely to the sovereign good pleasure, and free grace of God:

*who separated me from my mother's womb.* By his “mother” is meant, not in an improper and figurative sense, the Jewish church, or the old synagogue, the mother of all its members; the Jerusalem which then was, and was in bondage with her children; from which bondage, blindness, ignorance, superstition and bigotry, he was delivered, when called by grace: nor the church at Antioch, which is never called a mother church; and though he was by that church, with Barnabas, separated for the work of the ministry, yet not from it: but by his “mother”, without a figure is meant, his real natural mother, whose name is said to be Theocrita; and this separation from her womb is to be understood either of that distinction made of him in Providence, as soon as born; which not only took him, and safely brought him out of his mother's womb, but ever since took special care of him, and saved and preserved him to be called; for all the chosen vessels of salvation are distinguished from others, in a providential way; they are more under the special care of Providence than others are, even whilst in a state of unregeneracy; God's eye of Providence is upon them, his heart is towards them, he waits upon them to be gracious to them, and many are the remarkable appearances of Providence for them; (see ~~1229~~ Psalm 22:9,10). Or rather this designs divine predestination, which is a separation, a setting apart of persons, for such and such purposes, as here of the apostle; and the eternity of it, it being very early done, from his mother's womb; whilst he was in it, before he was born, and had done

either good or evil; from the beginning of time, from the foundation of the world, and before it, even from eternity: all which phrases express the same thing, and intend either his predestination to grace and glory, to holiness and happiness, to sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, and to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; or his predestination to apostleship, to the work of the ministry, to the Gospel of Christ, to which he was separated in eternity, and in time; reference seems to be had to (~~24005~~ Jeremiah 1:5) or indeed both, and his separation or predestination to both was owing to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, as was also his after call:

*and called me by his grace*; which follows upon separation, as it does on predestination, in ( ~~4830~~ Romans 8:30) and is to be interpreted either of his call at conversion, by powerful and efficacious grace; when he was called out of Jewish darkness, blindness, and ignorance, into Gospel light and knowledge; out of the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, and traditions of the fathers, into the liberty of Christ; from conversation with the men of the world, among whom before he had it, into the fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and saints; out of himself, and off of a dependence on his own righteousness, to trust in Christ: in a word, he was called into the grace of Christ here, into a participation of all the blessings of grace, and to eternal glory by him hereafter; which call was not of men, but of God, as the efficient cause of it; and by his grace, as the moving and procuring cause of it, and without the use of means, the word, which is the ordinary way in which God calls his people; so that it is plain his first light into the Gospel, was not of man, nor so much as by the means of man: or this call may respect his call to the ministry, which was at the same time he was effectually called by grace; and which also was not of man, nor of himself; he did not thrust himself into this work, but God called him; and that of his mere grace and good will, without any respect to any merits, deserts, or qualifications in him.

**Ver. 16.** *To reveal his Son in me*, etc..] This clause stands in connection with that in the preceding verse, “but when it pleased God”; the revelation of Christ in the apostle being the mere fruit and effect of God's will and pleasure: some versions read it “by me”, making the apostle to be the instrument and means, by whom God revealed his Son Jesus Christ to others, which is a certain truth, but this is rather contained in the following clause: others read it “to me”, and which also is true; for Christ was revealed to him in the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, the

necessity, suitableness, and completeness of his salvation; not objectively in the Gospel, or merely notionally, speculatively in the theory of things, but spiritually, experimentally, and savingly; and which is better expressed, and nearer the original, by “in him”; for he had an internal discovery of him as God's salvation, and of his interest in him as such; Christ was formed in him, his Spirit was put within him, his grace was implanted in him; he lived and dwelt in his heart by faith, as the Son in his own house; he was known unto him, as Christ in him the hope of glory: now the end of all this, of his separation from mother's womb, of his call by the grace of God, of the large revelation of Christ to him, and in him was,

*that*, says he,

*I might preach him among the Heathen*; as he did: Christ was the subject of his ministry; the things respecting his person, as that he was very God, the Son of God, God and man in one person the things respecting his office, as that he is the only Mediator between God and man, the prophet of the church, the high priest over the house of God, and King of saints; the doctrines of his grace, and which concern his obedience, sufferings, and death; as that peace and pardon are by his blood, justification by his righteousness, reconciliation and satisfaction by his sacrifice, and eternal life and complete salvation alone by him; all which is evangelizing, or preaching good news and glad tidings to sensible sinners: the persons to whom he was to preach these things, and did, were “the Heathen”, or Gentiles; he was a chosen vessel for this purpose; Christ, when he called him, sent him to them; the work he was to do, and did, lay chiefly among them; hence he is called an apostle, and teacher of them:

*immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*; which some understand of carnal reason, and that he did not stand reasoning and debating the matter with himself, whether it would be for his credit and reputation, for his worldly interest and advantage, to enter upon the ministry of the word; whether it would be advisable to expose himself, by so doing, to reproach and persecution; but immediately, as soon as he was called by grace, and Christ was revealed in him, he set about it: others, by “flesh and blood”, understand carnal men; and others his countrymen the Jews, and those of them that were his relations, his own flesh; but rather men in general are intended, any whatever, and especially the apostles; whom, he afterwards says, he had no conversation with, upon his first setting out in the ministry. It is usual with the Jews to call men, in distinction and opposition to God,

μδw ρϥb, “flesh and blood”. Infinite almost are the examples that might be given thereof out of their writings. (See Gill on “<sup><40167></sup>Matthew 16:17”). (See Gill on “<sup><40162></sup>Ephesians 6:12”).

**Ver. 17.** *Neither went I up to Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, immediately, as soon as he was converted, not till three years after, as follows; though by the account which Luke gives of him, (<sup><40123></sup>Acts 9:23,26) and by that which the apostle gives of himself, (<sup><40217></sup>Acts 22:17,18) it looks as if he went to Jerusalem some little time after his conversion, and before the date here given: and therefore some have thought that he did go up to Jerusalem pretty quickly, when, praying in the temple, he fell into a trance, and was ordered to make haste from thence, and go far hence unto the Gentiles and accordingly he made no stay, did not go to any of the apostles, and neither saw nor conversed with any of them, which is what he here says,

*to them which were apostles before me.* The twelve, who were called, ordained, and sent forth as apostles before he was; for last of all Christ appeared to him, and was seen by him as one born out of due time: his meaning is, not that he was a successor of the apostle's, but that they were instated in the office of apostleship before him; and this he mentions to show that he did not receive the Gospel from men, no not from the apostles themselves; since, upon his conversion, he did not go up to Jerusalem to see any of them, and talk with them; nor did he stand in need of any instructions from them, being immediately furnished sufficiently by Christ himself; nor did his work lie at Jerusalem, nor so much among the Jews as among the Gentiles, and therefore to them he went:

*but I went into Arabia.* This journey of the apostle is wholly omitted by Luke, nor should we have known anything of it, had it not been for this account: how long he stayed there, what he did, and what success he met with among the Arabs are no where related; no doubt but he preached the Gospel to them, and as his ministry everywhere was owned and blessed by God, it may be very reasonably thought it was here at his first setting out in it. The Arabic version reads it, “I went to Balcam”, which was a city in Syria; but without any foundation for it; for it was not Syria, but Arabia to which he went. There are three countries which bear the name of Arabia, and which are called to distinguish them from one another, Arabia Petraea, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Felix; of which (See Gill on “<sup><40211></sup>Acts 2:11”). It is very likely it was the former of these which the apostle went to, as being nearest to Syria, since from Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, he went

thither; and Damascus itself was at this time under the government of an Arabian king, (see <sup>f4</sup>2 Corinthians 11:32). So Pliny frequently speaks of Arabia as near to Syria, Palestine, and Judea: in one place he says <sup>f4</sup>, Arabia divides Judea from Egypt; and elsewhere <sup>f5</sup> observes, that Syria is distinguished by many names; for it is called Palestina, where it touches the Arabians, and Judea, and Coele, and Phenice; and Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan, he says, is next to Arabia and Egypt; and on the east of the lake of Asphaltites he places Arabia, that belongs to the Nomades; so likewise Josephus <sup>f6</sup> places Arabia at the east of Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan; and says <sup>f7</sup> in another place, that Arabia borders on Judea, the metropolis of which was Petra, where Aretas the king had his royal palace: Jerom <sup>f8</sup> likewise observes, that the river Jordan divides Judea and Arabia; so that this country into which the apostle went was not a great way off of Syria and Judea, whither he returned again after some time; which seems to be about the space of three years, by what follows in the next verse, and when he had done the work and will of God in those parts; where doubtless he was the instrument of converting souls, and planting churches, and here it is certain were churches in ages following: in the “third” century were churches in Arabia, mentioned along with the churches in Syria, by Eusebius <sup>f9</sup>; in which age lived two famous Arabian bishops, Beryllus and Maximus; and the same historian <sup>f10</sup> reports, that in the times of Dioclesian there were some wonderful martyrs in Arabia, who suffered the most cruel tortures and death, for the sake of Christ: and in the “fourth” century there were Arabian bishops in the Nicene council, and in other synods, as at Jerusalem and Sardica; and in the same century there were bishops of Arabia Petraea, at the synod in Antioch, whose names were Nicomachus and Cyrion: and also in the “fifth” century there were churches and bishops in the same country <sup>f11</sup>, not to trace them any further:

*and returned again unto Damascus*; and then it was, that being increased in spiritual strength and knowledge, he proved that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, to the confusion of the Jews there; which drew upon him their resentment and indignation, so that they took counsel and lay in wait to kill him; but the disciples let him down through a window, by the wall of the city in a basket, and so he escaped them.

**Ver. 18.** *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem*, etc..] Not three years after his return to Damascus, but after his conversion; and now it was that he moved to become a member of the church at Jerusalem; but they did not care to admit him, fearing that he was not a disciple, till such time

that Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles Peter and James, and related his conversion and his boldness in preaching the Gospel at Damascus: his view in going up to Jerusalem at this time was partly his own safety, being obliged to fly from Damascus, but chiefly

*to see Peter.* The Alexandrian copy, and another, read “Cephas”, and so does the Ethiopic version, the same with Peter: not to see what sort of a man he was, but to pay him a Christian visit; to converse with him about spiritual things; to know how the work of God went on under him, as the minister of the circumcision; and to relate to him, what success he had met with as the minister of the uncircumcision; but not to receive the Gospel from him, or to be ordained a preacher of it by him; for he had been three years already in the work of the ministry, before he made him this visit; and besides, his stay with him was very short, nor could he have received much from him, in so short a time, in an ordinary way:

*and abode with him fifteen days;* and even all this time was not wholly spent in conversation with him; for he was, during this time, coming in and going out at Jerusalem, where he preached boldly in the name of Christ, and disputed against the Grecians.

**Ver. 19.** *But other of the apostles saw I none,* etc..] This is observed to show, that as he did not receive the Gospel from Peter, so neither from any of the other apostles, whom he did not so much as see, much less converse with;

*save James the Lord's brother;* not James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, whom Herod slew with the sword; but James the son of Alphaeus, he who made the speech in the synod at Jerusalem, (<sup><4153></sup>Acts 15:13) was the writer of the epistle which bears his name, and was the brother of Joses, Simon, and Judas, who are called the brethren of Christ, (<sup><4155></sup>Matthew 13:55) and that because they were the kinsmen and relations of Christ according to the flesh, it being usual with the Jews to call such brethren. The relation came in and stood thus; this James was James the less, the son of Mary the wife of Cleophas, (<sup><4154></sup>Mark 15:40,47) which Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of our Lord, as Eusebius, from Hegesippus, relates; and so our Lord and this James were brothers' children, as was supposed: or else the wife of Cleophas the mother of James, was sister to Mary the mother of Christ, as she is called, (<sup><4125></sup>John 19:25) and so they were sisters' children, or own cousins; and thus Jerom<sup>f12</sup>, after much discourse on this subject, concludes



that Mary the mother of James the less was the wife of Alphaeus, (or Cleophas, which is the same,) and the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord, whom the Evangelist John surnames Mary of Cleophas; and persons in such a relation, and even uncles and nephews, were called brethren by the Jews; (see <sup><0125></sup>Genesis 12:5) (<sup><0138></sup>Genesis 13:8 29:12,15 <sup><0304></sup>Leviticus 10:4) nor is James one of our Lord's disciples being called his brother, any contradiction to (<sup><0405></sup>John 7:5) as the Jew <sup>f13</sup> affirms, where it is said, “neither did his brethren believe in him”; since they might not believe in him then, and yet believe in him afterwards: besides, Christ had brethren or relations according to the flesh, distinct from his disciples and apostles, and his brethren among them; (see <sup><0400></sup>Matthew 10:1 12:46,49) such as were James, Judas, and Simon; nor does the Evangelist John say, that none of Christ's brethren believed in him, only that they that came to him and bid him go into Judea did not. Some have been of opinion that a third James, distinct from James the son of Zebedee and James the son of Alphaeus, is here meant; who was not of the twelve apostles, and was surnamed James the just, and called the brother of Christ because of his faith, wisdom, and becoming conversation; but certain it is, that this James was of the number of the apostles, as appears from the exceptive clause, “other of the apostles saw I none, save James”, etc.. and from his being put with Cephas and John, who were pillars and the chief among the apostles; and besides it was James the son of Alphaeus, who was surnamed the “just”, and Oblias <sup>f14</sup>, and presided over the church at Jerusalem, and was a man of great esteem among the Jews; and is by <sup>f15</sup> Josephus, as here, called the brother of Jesus.

**Ver. 20.** *Now the things which I write unto you*, etc..] Concerning his education, his religion, his principles and practices before conversion; concerning his call by the grace of God, the revelation of Christ in him, and his preaching of him among the Heathen; concerning his travels to several places for this purpose, and especially concerning his not receiving the Gospel from men, not from any of the apostles; and how that upon his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem to any of them, to be taught and sent forth by them; and that it was not till three years after that he wept thither to see Peter, with whom he stayed but fifteen days, and saw no other apostle, but James the Lord's brother. Now this being a matter of moment, and what he had been charged with by the false teachers, that the Gospel he preached he had received from men, in order to disqualify him and bring him into contempt as an apostle, and which they had insinuated to the Galatians; he therefore not only wrote these things, but for the

confirmation of them solemnly appeals to God the searcher of hearts for the truth of them;

*behold, before God I lie not*; which is not only a strong asseveration, but a formal oath; it is swearing by the God of truth, calling him to be witness of the things that he had written; whence it is manifest that an oath upon proper occasions, where there is a necessity for it, and a good end to be answered by it, may be lawfully made.

**Ver. 21.** *Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.*] For having disputed against the Grecians at Jerusalem, and being too hard for them, it so irritated them, that they were going to murder him; which being known to the brethren there, they got him out of the way, and had him down to Caesarea, and so to Tarsus, a city in Cilicia; where he was born; in which places and in the countries about he preached the Gospel of Christ; to Tarsus, Barnabas went for him seeking him, and finding him brought him to Antioch in Syria; and both in Syria and Cilicia he preached, no doubt with success, since we read of believing Gentiles and churches in those parts he afterwards visited; being sent along with others, with the letter and decrees of the synod at Jerusalem to them, and whom he confirmed; (see Gill on “<sup><4153></sup>Acts 15:23”), (see Gill on “<sup><4154></sup>Acts 15:41”): in the Greek text these countries are called “climates”; a climate in geography is said <sup>f16</sup> to be a part of the surface of the earth, bounded by two circles parallel to the equator, and of such a breadth as that the longest day in the parallel nearer the pole, exceeds the longest day in that next the equator, by some certain space, viz. half an hour — . The beginning of the climate is the parallel circle wherein the day is the shortest, the end of the climate is that wherein the day is the longest; — each climate only differs from its contiguous ones, in that the longest day in summer is longer or shorter by half an hour in the one place than in the other: — vulgarly the term climate is bestowed on any country or region differing from another, either in respect of the seasons, the quality of the soil, or even the manners of the inhabitants, without any regard to the length of the longest day; in which sense it seems to be used here, as also in ( <sup><6153></sup>Romans 15:23 <sup><7110></sup>2 Corinthians 11:10). Of the country of Syria, (see Gill on “<sup><4095></sup>Matthew 4:24”). Cilicia is a country of Asia Minor, now called Caramania; it had its name of Cilicia, as Herodotus says <sup>f17</sup>, from Cilix, the son of Agenor, a Phoenician: though Bochart <sup>f18</sup> derives it from Challekim or Challukim, which signifies stones, it being a stony country; and so Herodotus <sup>f19</sup> calls it “mountainous” Cilicia; it is said to have Pamphilia on the west, the tops of

Mount Taurus on the north, Mount Amanus on the east, and the Cilician sea on the south; Jerom says <sup>f20</sup>, Cilicia is a province of Asia, which the river Cydnus cuts in the middle, and Mount Amanus, of which Solomon makes mention, separates it from Syria-Coele.

**Ver. 22.** *And was unknown by face*, etc..] Or “in person”. This is said to prevent what might be objected, that though the apostle had not received the Gospel he preached from any of the apostles at Jerusalem; yet he might have had it from the churches that were in the land of Judea, and from some of the principal men in them; but this was so far from being truth, that he was not so much as known unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; for there was not only a famous church of believers in Christ at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the land, but there were several congregated churches in the several parts of that country: by Judea we are to understand that part of the land of Israel so called, which was distinct not only from Samaria; but from Galilee and Perea, or the country beyond Jordan; for according to the Jews <sup>f21</sup>, the land of Israel was divided into three parts, Judea, Perea, and Galilee. Judea again was divided into three parts, the hill country, the plain, and the valley; and the plain of Lydda is as the plain of the south, and its mountainous part as the king's mountain; from Bethhoron to the sea is one province: and elsewhere <sup>f22</sup> it is said, that the hill country of Judea is the king's mountain, the plain of it is the plain of the south, and the valley is from Engedi to Jericho — from Bethhoron to Emmaus is mountainous, from Emmaus to Lydda is a plain, and from Lydda to the sea a valley; from which may be collected where this country lay, and where were these churches here spoken of; the foundation of which might be laid in the conversion of some in those parts, through the ministry of the disciples of Christ, who were appointed witnesses of him not only in Jerusalem, but in all Judea and Samaria, (~~4005~~ Acts 1:8) and about the time of the Apostle Paul's conversion, and his being at Jerusalem, there were churches gathered in Judea, as distinct from Galilee and Samaria, (~~4005~~ Acts 9:31) particularly at Caesarea, Lydda, Saron, and Joppa. It is very likely that all the apostles, when they first set out to preach the Gospel after the ascension of Christ and the effusion of the Spirit, began in Judea; though some might make a very short stay, and others a longer. The Apostle and Evangelist Matthew is generally thought to have exercised his ministry chiefly in Judea, and to have continued there long; here he wrote his Gospel for the sake of the Jews that believed <sup>f23</sup>; and that, as a very ancient writer says <sup>f24</sup>, when Peter and Paul preached at Rome, and founded

the church there. Judas Thaddaeus is also said <sup>f25</sup> to go through Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia; and certain it is, that Philip, after he had baptized the eunuch, preached in all the cities from Azotus to Caesarea, where he seems to have stayed awhile and preached, (~~418D~~ Acts 8:40) and where afterwards was a Gospel church state, of which (see Gill on "~~440S~~ Acts 10:48") and at Lydda and Saron, which were both in Judea, there were saints who were visited by the Apostle Peter, and others converted by him, about the time that our apostle here refers to; of the church at Lydda; (see Gill on "~~440E~~ Acts 9:32") at Joppa also, which was in the tribe of Dan, there were disciples at the same time, and very likely a church there; (see Gill on "~~440S~~ Acts 9:38") and it may be observed that the Apostle Peter was the minister of the circumcision, he had the Gospel of the circumcision committed to him, and he continued with and preached much to the circumcised Jews; and so in all likelihood was the instrument of planting the churches in Judea here spoken of. These are said to be

*in Christ*, as the church at Thessalonica, and that at Corinth are elsewhere said to be; because they professed to believe in Christ, were called by his name, and called upon his name; and though every individual member of them might not be in Christ, really united to him, and have communion with him; yet since they were all under a profession of him, they are considered as in him. The Arabic version reads it, "the churches of Judea which believe in Christ"; which though not a literal translation, gives the true sense of the passage, and distinguishes those churches from the synagogues or assemblies of the Jews which did not believe in Christ.

**Ver. 23.** *But they had heard only*, etc..] What they knew of the apostle was only by hearsay; they had never seen him, nor heard him preach, nor conversed with him, only had it reported to them;

*that he which persecuted us in times past*; some few years ago, and not them personally, but such as were of the same faith with them, the church at Jerusalem and the members of it; which he made havoc of, committing men and women to prison, and causing others to flee to strange cities;

*now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*; all as in him lay he endeavoured to destroy it, though he could not entirely root it up; he destroyed many of the disciples that held it, and did all he could to discourage others from embracing and professing it; he made use of the strongest arguments he was master of to confute it, and of the secular arm to crush and extirpate it, but now was become a preacher of it: by "faith" is

meant not so much the grace of faith, though to show the nature, necessity, and usefulness of faith in Christ, and to direct and encourage sensible sinners, as he did the jailer, to believe in him, was a principal part of his ministry; but rather the doctrine of faith, which is always designed, when it is said, as here, to be preached or to be obeyed, stood fast in and contended for, or to be departed and erred from, to be made shipwreck of and denied. The Gospel is called the word of faith, the mystery of faith, the faith of the Gospel, common faith, most holy faith, the faith once delivered to the saints; it contains things to be believed; it proposes and directs to the great object of faith; and is the means of implanting and increasing that grace, and without which the ministry of it is of no use: it takes in all articles of faith, respecting the divine Being, the unity of God, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the equal and proper deity of each person, their personal distinctions from each other, the attribution of all divine works, worship and honour to them; it relates to everything concerning man, in his original creation, in his state of innocence and integrity; concerning the fall of Adam, the imputation of his sin to all his posterity, the corruption of human nature, and the impotence of man to all that is spiritually good: it regards all the acts of grace of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in and towards any of the sons of men: it includes all the doctrines of it, as of the free, sovereign, everlasting, and unchangeable love of God; of eternal, personal, and irrelative election of some to grace and glory, by which both are secured; of the everlasting, absolute, unconditional, and sure covenant of grace; of particular redemption by Christ, proceeding on a full satisfaction to divine justice; of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; of reconciliation and pardon by his blood; of regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit; of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal glory: now this faith, in the several momentous branches of it, the apostle preached, published, declared, spoke out openly and publicly; fully and completely, without dropping, concealing, or keeping back anything; clearly and plainly, without using ambiguous phrases, or words of double meaning, with all faithfulness and integrity, boldness and constancy.

**Ver. 24.** *And they glorified God in me.*] Or “for me”; on his account; for the wonderful grace bestowed on him and wrought in him; for the surprising change that was made in him, that of a persecutor he should become a preacher, which they ascribed, as he himself did, to the abundant grace of God; they were greatly thankful and blessed God, who had given

him such large gifts, and made him so greatly useful in the cause, and among the churches of Christ. And by observing this, how much the churches in Judea were affected with the grace of God vouchsafed to him, though they had never seen him nor heard him, he tacitly strikes at and rebukes the false teachers, and the Galatians that adhered to them, for their different treatment of him; to whom he was not only known by face, but had preach among them so fully, clearly, and powerfully, the Gospel of the grace of God.