

Title: What's The Point? The Apostle Paul's Thesis

Text: Galatians 1:11-12

Central Idea: Paul's Gospel came directly from Christ the Gospel

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### **[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer**

**11 For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

### **[ii] Last week . . .**

Covered 1:10 while also spending more time in vv. 6-9.

Noted that v. 10 is a “hinge” or “transition” verse. Connects vv. 6-9 to vv. 11 & t/verses that follow well into or thru chapt. 2.

So there's an extended thot unit here that begins in v. 11 & doesn't end until we get to t/end of chapter 2.

In that regard, Verses 11-12 set the stage for the rest of chapter 1 and pretty much the entirety of that second chapter

### **[iii] Footnote**

Not everything we see here is directly applicable to our lives (patience). (indirect vs. direct)

### **[iv] Sermonizing . . .**

There is a danger that many preachers fall prey to: sermonizing.

Take a passage & use some imagination for it to speak to t/lives of t/audience.

Or take a passage, read it, then never address what's there.

Or skip over it entirely!

Challenge for me is to clearly / accur. explain it & try to keep it relevant.

That is not easy. So we're laying some foundation for what comes later in Galatians. Foundation = Doctrine.

**[v] This is the way the N.T. letters are often structured**  
There's doctrinal/applicational balance. BTIM t/doctrinal parts are t/foundation for those that are more directly applicable.

Doctrine precedes duty. T/found. of truth must be laid b4 you can rightly go about using it in your life.

**[vi] We find books of t/Bible laid out upon that principle**  
Ephesians: 1-3 doctrinal; 4-6 practice

Romans: After 11 chapters of rich doctrinal truth we see t/first direct application in 12:1&2 ==>

1 I URGE you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Sim. here in Galatians. Most of t/1st 4 chapt are focused on historical & doctrinal truth.

Chapters 5-6 are more directly applicational.

Doctrine before Duty — Explanation before Exhortation.

“Let me first explain this to you and then I'm going to tell you what to do with it all.”

**[vii] Many have a hard time with that principle (learning before doing)**

We're not patient. We want to get right doing before we learn how.

Plus so many are not disciplined enough to use their minds / having to think.

Would never want to entrust yourself to a Dr. who has no medical training, regardless of how much they want to help people medically. “He has a great heart for people, he just doesn't know a whole lot about medicine.”

**[viii] That mindset is too-often true of the American pulpit**

Too many want comfy entertainment, or warm, fuzzy platitudes, or a quick fix high energy drink of experiential excitement wk after wk — as if each sermon is to be some sort of warm bubble bath, stand up comedy routine, motivational speech, or carnival ride.

Put in 3 bucks, go for a ride – 25 minutes – it's over.

Be patient as we work through all this.

Explanation before Exhortation.

With all that in mind ==>

**[ix] Verses 11-12 set the stage for the rest of chapters 1 and 2**

In that regard, 1:11 – 2:11 make up Paul's autobiography. Specifically – Verses 11-12 of chapt. 1 give us his central “thesis” statement for this entire passage.

“Thesis?” = proposition; main point, or central statement upon which an argument is built.

**[x] There are 2 main points in vv. 11 & 12 ==>**

***I. Paul's Thesis Introduced (11)***

***II. Paul's Thesis Illuminated (12)***

***I. Paul's Thesis Introduced (11)***

Where he gives his main statement.

***II. Paul's Thesis Illuminated (12)***

Where he gives a further elaboration or explanation of that main statement (what he said in v. 11).

My thesis statement as it relates to our text (big idea) ==>

*Paul's gospel came directly from Christ who is the Gospel!*

**I. Paul's Thesis Introduced (11)**

**11 For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.**

Main point of verse 11 ==>

**A. Paul's Message Was Not “According to Man”**

We're going to ask 3 questions in that regard.

- 1. How Does This Fit the Context?*
- 2. Why Is This Important?*
- 3. What is the Central Focus?*

## **1. How Does This Fit the Context (“for”)?**

**11 For . . .**

### **a. Words like “for” “but” “therefore” “moreover” point to context**

Connects back to v. 10. Paul was not out to please people. His motivation was to please G. by being faithful to His Word/Gospel.

### **b. What follows (context) is Paul's defense of his thesis:**

#### **(1) Look at how this unfolds**

Verse 13 – Paul's life as an unregenerate Jew

Verse 14 – His accomp. as a Pharisee

Verses 15-16 – His dramatic conversion to X and his calling to preach t/Gospel to the Gentiles.

All of that by direct revelation from JC (starting w/Damascus Rd.).

**11 For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.**

#### **(2) Paul is establishing his apostolic credentials**

##### **(a) He goes on to say (verses 16 & 17) ==>**

16b I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 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.

Paul's defends his thesis by first est. that his conversion was dramatic and miraculous. That's t/context.

His conversion was independent of t/Jerusalem Apostles; it came by t/direct revelation of JC when He appeared to him on t/Damascus Rd. (Acts 9).

After he was converted, he didn't rush to Jerusalem to consult w/the Apostles there.

His faith in X was independent of t/Jerus. Apostles.

Like when t/Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli was accused of following Martin Luther . . .

Zwingli wasn't competing w/Luther.

Paul wasn't competing w/the likes of Peter and James. He's addressing t/Judaizers' contention that he was 2d rate to those in Jerusalem or was under their authority. (Jud. = those who insisted on Xn conformity to Jew. laws).

### **c. Judaizers . . .**

Dr. Timothy George in his commentary on Galatians summarizes how the Judaizers may have attempted to defend their 'message' in their own words. He does so by way of a fictional letter that t/Judaizers could have penned to t/Gal. Xns.

“Dear brothers of Galatia, we greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We have heard how through the ministry of Brother Paul you have been converted from the worship of dumb idols to serve the true and living God of Israel. We are glad you have made such a good beginning, but we are

afraid that there are some very important things about the gospel Paul has omitted to tell you. We ourselves come from the church at Jerusalem which is directed by the very apostles Jesus called and ordained. Paul though is an upstart. Why, he never even knew Jesus while he was on earth and was certainly never commissioned by him as an apostle. True, Paul did visit Jerusalem just after he stopped persecuting us, and there he learned the ABCs of the Christian faith from the true apostles. But the message he now preaches bears no resemblance to theirs. I don't imagine he even told you about circumcision!

Why, this is the very way God has made it possible for you Gentiles to become a part of the New Israel. Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Circumcision is just as important as baptism—nay, more important, for it will introduce you to a higher plane of Christian living. If you will observe this holy ordinance of the law, God will be pleased with you. We are just now forming a new association of law-observant churches, and we would love for Galatia to be represented! We are the true Christians. Jesus, our great example, pleased the Father by fulfilling the law and so can you!” [George, 95–96]

Again, a fictional letter that could have come from t/pen of those heretical Judaizers.

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#### **d. Review (context) . . .**

**(1) Verses 11-12 = Paul's Thesis**

**(2) Verses 13-17 = First Defense of His Thesis**  
(the Jerusalem church didn't commission Paul)

**(3) Verses 18-24 = Second Defense (“then” in v. 18)**

Point: “I did go to Jerusalem 3 years later, but it was only to become acquaint. w/Peter, not to get instruction from him or any of t/other As.”

“I had so little exposure in Jer. that I was personally unknown to most Xns there.”

**(4) 2:1 (“then”) = marks Paul's 3d defense**

2:1 THEN after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem . . .

This section continues through v. 10.

Theme of this part of Paul's defense is in v. 6:

2:6 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.

**(5) 2:11 (“but”) = here begins Paul's 4th defense**

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Peter was being hypocritical (very thing t/Judaizers were accusing Paul of). But it's Paul that stands true to t/Gospel in t/face of Peter. Paul who demonstrates Apostolic authority in t/face of Peter who many considered t/Apostle of t/Apostles.

This section ends either at v. 14 or it continues to t/end of t/chapt.

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Some have likened this to a courtroom drama where Paul takes on the role of defense attorney. He gives his statement in vv. 11-12 and then systematically unfolds a 4-part defense of that statement.

### ***I. Paul's Thesis Introduced (11)***

Main point of verse 11 ==>

#### ***A. Paul's Message Was Not "According to Man" (three questions)***

##### ***1. How Does This Fit the Context? ("for")***

We just answered that.

##### ***2. Why Is This Important? ("I would have you to know")***

**11 For I would have you to know, brethren . . .**

**a. These words "for I would have you know" are distinctly Pauline**

IOW – Paul likes to use this expression.

1 Cor. 12:3 Therefore I want you to know, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 15:1 NOW, brethren, I make known to you ("I want you to know"), the gospel which I preached to you . . .

Saying

**11 . . . I would have you to know . . .**

was almost idiomatic.

**b. Paul is emphasizing the fact that he wants to be understood**

Vernacular: "Let me be perfectly clear" / "read my lips"

**c. Look at what he adds ==>**

**11 For I would have you to know, BRETHREN . . .**

**(1) Paul is demonstrating his pastoral love**

Goes on from here to refer to his readers as “brethren” no less than 7x.

This is t/1st real positive thing he has to say to them (cf. No Time For Kudos / vv. 6-9).

Also reinforces the assurance of hope he expresses in 5:10: I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will adopt no other view . . . IOW . . .

**(2) ἀδελφοί (plural) - word with rich significance**

Word that marks out family or brotherly love (cf. Philadelphia — philos + adelphos = city of brotherly love).

**(a) Jews used it**

Would call each other brother. But their use, at least during t/time of X, lack significance / depth.

Paul may have used it as a Jew. But t/meaning took on a diff. dimension for him after he came to know X.

We’re mindful of the words of Jesus in Mark 3:35 ==>

“For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

1979 Pop Group Sister Sledge was nom. for a Grammy Award for their hit song, “We Are Family” – which went on to be t/theme for Pittsburgh Pirates in their quest to win t/79 W.S.

20 years ago t/song was featured during the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

4 musicians may call themselves “family” // 40 baseball players // thousands of political delegates — pales in comparison to what’s true of we who are t/family of Jesus.

I have no biological brothers or sisters . . .

**d. Paul speaks as an Apostle, but also as a Pastor & as a brother in Christ**

1 of t/things I was adamant about when I interviewed to be preaching elder here over 20 yrs ago was we (3 at t/time) be embraced as family. I understand that my role as a pastor carries w/it a higher degree of responsibility & authority. But like Paul, I’m also your brother in X; Lois your sister . . .

**2. Why Is This Important (“I would have you to know”)?**

**e. Sense of urgency**

11 . . . **Brethren, I would have you to know . . .**

“Listen-up” - “Let me be clear about something.”

**(1) “This is important” “WHY?”**

Because it sets t/stage for Paul's defense of t/Gospel. And that's not just important. It's essential.

Leads us to our next and last ? (“What’s t/answer class?”)

**3. What is the Central Focus? (“the gospel preached”)**

11 **For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.**

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Remember ==>

## ***I. This is the Introduction to Paul's Thesis (11)***

Main point of which ==>

### ***A. Paul's Message Was Not "According to Man"***

#### **a. That point also connects to verse 1**

**1 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)**

It's about t/integrity of Paul's Apostleship & connected to that t/integrity of his preaching. 2 cannot be separated.

It's about t/Gospel. Central focus. If I'm not accurate as to t/gospel I don't have integrity, period.

#### **b. Three elements here in v. 11**

1. **THE GOSPEL** (noun)

2. **PREACHED by me** (verb)

3. **is NOT ACCORDING TO MAN.** (how was it preached?)

It's all about THE GOSPEL ("good news").

#### **c. There is a sweet redundancy here (word "gospel")**

1:6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

#### **d. Paul is dealing with a top tier issue**

This isn't diff's over t/millennium, or t/means of baptism, or some other secondary issue of theology.

One commentator well states ==>

“He was defending the very heart of the Christian faith against a sinister and subversive attack upon it. On this issue—the nature of the gospel—there is not room for equivocation or doubt. Nothing less than the reality of the salvation secured by Jesus Christ is at stake in this unyielding assertion.” [Timothy George,108]

One loose paraphrase of this verse, v. 11 ==>

“My gospel (and my preaching of the gospel) do not belong to the purely human level of existence: the gospel message did not come to me through human channels—it was not mediated to me through any man; and my preaching of the gospel has not been guided by human motives and ambitions.” [J. Bligh, cited in Timothy George, 108]

#### **e. Again – What is the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον)?**

It is good news. Good news that answers t/? ==>

"How can one who is sinful & destined for God's wrath be forgiven & restored to peace w/God so that he may worship&enjoy Him forever?"

#### **(1) ABC's - Person; Work; Application**

A. Person – JC t/2d person of t/Trinity; Took upon Himself humanity. 1 mediator between God and man had to be both. Truly, fully God // Man.

B. Work – Lived a perfectly righteous life, tempted w/o sin. Lamb of God who took upon Himself t/sin of t/world, dying in t/place of all who would believe in Him for eternal life.

He paid t/penalty of my sin so that I could have His righteousness credited to my account. Resurrected from t/dead and ascended to heaven and will return again.

C. Application. How? By grace through faith (instrument – t/hand)....

IOTB restored to peace w/God so that we may worship & enjoy Him forever & avoid t/alternative (eternal punishment in hell) is through t/Cross of JC. Believing in Him as t/one who suffered God's wrath in my place, repentance from dead works 2 faith in a living, satisfying G.

By Gs grace alone, through faith (trust) alone in Jesus alone. That sums up the “good news.”

### ***I. Paul's Thesis Introduced (11)***

Main point of verse 11 ==>

***A. Paul's Message Was Not “According to Man” (three questions)***

- 1. How Does This Fit the Context?***
- 2. Why Is This Important?***
- 3. What is the Central Focus?***

### ***II. Paul's Thesis Illuminated (12)***

By “Illum.” I mean expanded upon, further explained.

See that in the 1st word of v. 12 ==>

**12 For . . .**

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We're going to sum up v. 12 this way ==>

***A. Paul's Message Was the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”***  
*Paul's Gospel came directly from Christ the Gospel*

Parallel to our 3 questions of v. 11 we have 3 statements in v. 12. 2 Negative statements and a positive one.

Help to look at these 2 together ==>

**1. Negative Assertion #1:**

**12 For I neither received it [i.e. the gospel] from man . . .**

**2. Negative Assertion #2:**

**12 . . . nor was I taught it . . .**

“I didn’t receive t/gospel from man; I wasn’t taught t/gospel by man.” Not received from, not taught by.

**a. What's the difference? Is there a difference?**

I think there is.

**12 For I neither received it from man . . .**

**(1) “Received” = παραλαβανω**

Tech. term referring to the transmission of truth.

But Paul would have in mind here specifically his initial act of faith in believing in JC as t/Son of God. Gospel. That wasn't received by means of a human mediator or preacher.

**12 For I neither received it from man . . .**

**b. Second statement**

**12 . . . nor was I taught it . . .**

Would refer to the fact that he wasn't indoctrinated by another teacher, as a Jew would be catechized by his rabbi.

### **(1) Important to note . . .**

Paul's not saying his Gospel was different from t/other apostles (those in Jerusalem), but that he received it independ. of them. Point.

He affirms that he didn't receive t/Gospel through t/Jerus. Apostles. They didn't convert him & they didn't disciple him.

### **(2) Why is that important? Why did it matter?**

Judaizers were saying, "Don't listen to Paul – he didn't get his gospel from an authorized dealer" (Apostles in Jerusalem). Therefore, he is inferior. Not a true Apostle.

Partly true. Paul says ==>

"I wasn't converted under them; I didn't receive t/gospel from them."

"How did you receive it, Paul?"

### **3. The Positive Assertion:**

**12 . . . but [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

**a. Paul received the gospel through Jesus who is the gospel!**

Couldn't get that truth from a better source than that!

When Paul says →

**12 . . . but [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**

He's not talking as much about t/message as he is the Person.

*Paul's gospel came directly from Christ who is the Gospel!*



**b. Phrase in verse 12: “revelation of Jesus Christ” can be understood in two ways**

**(1) In the Greek text it's in the Genitive Case**

Certain genitives can be understood objectively or subjectively.

IOW - we could understand Paul, in saying,

**12 . . . [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**  
that he received the gospel when Jesus Christ revealed it [gospel] to him.

While there is some merit there, I think it's better to understand this as an objectively ==>

**(2) The Emphasis is on the person of Christ**

It was Jesus who was revealed to Paul in His Person.

X is t/Gospel / Gospel is X!

“I received the Gospel when JC was revealed to me in all his Glory.”

IOW – X is the object, the substance.

Ultimately t/Gospel cannot be reduced to 4 laws on a tract or methodology. Message is essential, but behind t/message is a Person: JC.

JC is the Gospel! The message points to the Person.

We don't merely receive a message; we receive JC in His fullness of who He is.

Matthew 13:44–46 44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

That’s Jesus! . . .

Last wk. I heard a recording of a mega-church pastor (since defrocked) who claimed in a sermon that their CH was t/hope of t/world. Really? Gross overstatement. I wouldn’t even say that C.C. is t/hope of Rochester, much less t/T.O.C.

No singular CH is t/hope of t/world. Only 1 hope: Jesus Christ.

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*Paul's gospel came directly from Christ who is the Gospel!*

This sets the stage for the rest of what TAP has to say.

### **III. Life Application: Christ is the Gospel**

#### **A. Testimonies . . .**

Some time ago I was looking at some written testimonies of adults (no one here). In explaining why they thot they were Xns, I was reading things like, “My mom said that at age 6 I prayed the prayer.” Is that t/Gospel?

#### **B. The Gospel is Propositional — But also a Person**

Message that involves words, truths, objective statements. But if there is no Person behind all that there is no Gospel.

Listen to what John Piper has to say in that regard (rather lengthy). We'll close with this quote.

There is nothing in itself that makes "forgiveness of sins" good news. Whether being forgiven is good news depends on what it leads to. You could walk out of a courtroom innocent of a crime and get killed on the street. Forgiveness may or may not lead to joy. Even escaping hell is not in itself the good news we long for — not if we find heaven to be massively boring.

Nor is justification in itself good news. Where does it lead? That is the question. Whether justification will be good news, depends on the award we receive because of our imputed righteousness. What do we receive because we are counted righteous in Christ? The answer is fellowship with Jesus.

Forgiveness of sins and justification are good news because they remove obstacles to the only lasting, all-satisfying source of joy: Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not merely the means of our rescue from damnation; he is the goal of our salvation. If he is not satisfying to be with, there is no salvation. He is not merely the rope that pulls us from the threatening waves; he is the solid beach under our feet, and the air in our lungs, and the beat of our heart, and the warm sun on our skin, and the song in our ears, and the arms of our beloved.

This is why the New Testament often defines the gospel as, simply, Christ. . . . Or, more specifically, the gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ". . . . And even more wonderfully, perhaps, Paul says that the preaching of the

gospel is the preaching of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

Therefore to believe the gospel is not only to accept the awesome truths that 1) God is holy, 2) we are hopeless sinners, 3) Christ died and rose again for sinners, and 4) this great salvation is enjoyed by faith in Christ-but believing the gospel is also to treasure Jesus Christ as your unsearchable riches. What makes the gospel Gospel is that it brings a person into the everlasting and ever-increasing joy of Jesus Christ.

The words Jesus will speak when we come to heaven are: "Enter into the joy of your Master" (Matthew 25:21). The prayer he prayed for us ended on this note: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory" (John 17:24). The glory he wants us to see is the "unsearchable riches of Christ." It is "the immeasurable riches of [God's] grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

The superlatives "unsearchable" and "immeasurable" mean that there will be no end to our discovery and enjoyment. There will be no boredom. Every day will bring forth new and stunning things about Christ which will cause yesterday's wonder to be seen in new light, so that not only will there be new sights of glory everyday, but the accumulated glory will become more glorious with every new revelation.

The gospel is the good news that the everlasting and ever-increasing joy of the never-boring, ever-satisfying Christ is ours freely and eternally by faith in the sin-forgiving death and hope-giving resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[[www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-christian-gospel](http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-christian-gospel)]

Is that the Gospel you know and love?

Better, is that t/Jesus you know and love?