

# Galatians

## Chapter One

### Verse 15

1. Calvinists love this verse, but what is ironic is that it **disproves** Calvinism.
  - Calvinists teach unconditional election which they say is eternal, taking place before the foundation of the world. They tend to read unconditional election into every passage in the Bible.
  - Paul doesn't give any hint that he was elected to salvation in eternity past. There is no eternal, unconditional election in this verse.
2. Paul is simply recognizing that God had a special place of service for him and a special purpose for him **while in his mother's womb** (not in eternity past).
  - I believe God has a plan for each and every one of us. God is not reactive, but proactive.
  - Yet, we know that man has a free will to either respond to God's purposes or rebel against God's purposes. Some babies are aborted in their mother's womb. This isn't God's will, but people have a free will to make choices.
3. God had a plan for Paul, yet Paul still had to respond to God's gracious calling in faith.
  - God had a plan for Jonah, and he ran the other way.
  - Jesus told Israel in **Matthew 23:37** that he desired to gather her up as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but "...ye would not."
4. This is what the great faith chapter in Hebrews 11 is all about. God has a plan that He wants fulfilled; He calls men and women to participate in His plan and they either respond in faith or unbelief.
5. The same word for the "calling" in this verse is the same word when Jesus said He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. We know that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, yet all do **not** repent. **2 Peter 3:9**

### Verses 16-17

1. God's plan and calling for Paul involved him preaching Christ to the Gentile nations.
  - Christ was revealed **to** Paul (Acts 9) that He might be revealed **through** Paul. vs. 16; cf. **Gal. 2:20, Acts 26:14-18, Eph. 3:7-9**
  - This is God's plan for every believer in this church age. As we stand before God in Christ, so Christ stands before the world **in us**, as we bid people to be reconciled to God. God reveals His Son through us - sinners who have been made saints by the grace of God.
  - Christ came to live **in** you that He might live **through** you.
2. After Paul's conversion, he makes it clear that he did not confer (consult) with any human beings concerning the gospel he preached. He did not go to Jerusalem (the headquarters for the twelve apostles - **Acts 8:1**).

3. This would have made sense humanly speaking, but Paul's gospel and doctrine would not be simply a different twist to the twelve's kingdom-based doctrine. It would be something completely new and, up to this point, unrevealed to any of the twelve.
4. Instead of Jerusalem, God sent Paul into Arabia. Luke never records this in Acts, so we do not know how long Paul was there (possibly the greater part of three years) or any details as to what happened. Most likely, God took Paul away into a place of solitude to begin to reveal to Paul the incredible truths of the mystery for this dispensation of grace.
  - The disciples were taught by Christ for three years **on earth**, now Paul would be taught for three years by Christ from His glorified position **in heaven**.
5. After this time in Arabia, Paul returned to Damascus where he preached Christ boldly in the synagogues. **Acts 9:20**

### **Verses 18-20**

1. Three years after Paul's conversion he finally went to Jerusalem, where he spent two weeks with Peter and also saw James.
2. According to **Acts 9:27**, it was Barnabas who took him to Peter and James, but Paul was far too controversial a figure to remain in Jerusalem. **Acts 9:29**
3. They quickly got him out of town (**Acts 9:30**). The persecutor had now become the persecuted.
4. This was all in God's plan. God knew that Paul's ministry was **not** to be based out of Jerusalem like the twelve (**Acts 22:17-21**). He was to take the gospel of grace to the Gentiles.
5. It had to be discouraging to Paul. He must have felt a sense of rejection and disappointment, yet God was preparing him for a mighty work among the Gentiles.

### **Verses 21-24**

1. Paul went through Syria and ended up back in his home province of Cilicia.
2. Paul was unknown by face to the churches of Judea. This was not to be the place of Paul's ministry. His ministry would be to the Gentile nations.
3. The churches of Judea simply heard of Paul's conversion to Christianity and they gave God the glory for it.
4. Paul ends up back in his home town of Tarsus and waits for several years before he received the knock on his door from Barnabas, who invites him to come and help in the new church at Antioch.
5. As chapter 2 opens, Paul is serving in the church at Antioch and heading to Jerusalem on a very important mission.