







Day 1

-  Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

-  Conventions of these StudySheets:
 -  Pencil icon indicates commentary or notes; since commentary is not Scripture, they are purposely less prominent (i.e., font-size is smaller).
 -  “Christ Jesus:” we in the United States are traditionally given birth names with a first, middle, and surname (last-name or family-name). Back in the time of Jesus, people were called ‘first-name, son of father’s first-name’ (e.g., Jesus, son of Joseph). Because “Christ” is Jesus’ title, these StudySheets will frequently refer to Jesus as ‘Christ Jesus’. The purpose is to avoid the American naming convention that might indicate “Christ” is Jesus’ last name (surname). By the way the Apostle Paul uses Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ interchangeably.

-  The best analogy I have heard to describe the Godhead of God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son, and the Holy spirit is to envision a three-fingered hand (or a three-leaf clover). Each finger has a separate name, but the three-fingers are all part of the same hand – the Godhead. The Jewish faith is unfalteringly monotheistic (belief in one God), so the concept of Christ Jesus the Son is blasphemous to them. That said, a Jewish commentator in his verse-by-verse expository of the Book of Genesis conveniently explained-away (or ignored) the plural pronouns of “us” and “we” that refer to God and occur in Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7 (©2019 by Dennis Prager, The Rational Bible Genesis, published by Regeneray Faith. Pages 24-25, 59, & 150).

-  One last thought, if it takes a great deal of effort (i.e., convoluted explanation) to reach a certain Biblical conclusion, then it is probably false. I pray that this concept is readily apparent as you work through these StudySheet lessons. The Bible is a wonderfully written historical narrative. The Bible also provides us with words that describe God’s character: His desire for all humanity, His agapé love for all, and His abhorrence of sin. Sin is the barrier between God and humankind; Jesus destroys the barrier for those who believe in His saving grace.

Greeting

¹ Paul, an apostle -- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead --

Q1. Paul seems to be terribly presumptuous. How can Paul claim that he was sent by “Jesus Christ and God the Father”?

Q2. Was “Paul” always known as Paul? Or did he have a name that was changed? If yes, what was his prior name?

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Q3. Is Paul really an Apostle?

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-60; 8:3; 9:1-19 [The Message (MSG)]

^{6:8-10} Stephen, brimming with God's grace and energy, was doing wonderful things among the people, unmistakable signs that God was among them. But then some men from the meeting place whose membership was made up of freed slaves, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and some others from Cilicia and Asia, went up against him trying to argue him down. But they were no match for his wisdom and spirit when he spoke . . .

^{7:54-56} At that point they [the Jewish religious leaders and followers] went wild, a rioting mob of catcalls and whistles and invective. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, hardly noticed — he only had eyes for God, whom he saw in all his glory with Jesus standing at his side. He said, "Oh! I see heaven wide open and the Son of Man standing at God's side!"

⁵⁷⁻⁵⁸ Yelling and hissing, the mob drowned him out. Now in full stampede, they dragged him out of town and pelted him with rocks. The ringleaders took off their coats and asked a young man named Saul to watch them.

⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰ As the rocks rained down, Stephen prayed, "Master Jesus, take my life." Then he knelt down, praying loud enough for everyone to hear, "Master, don't blame them for this sin" — his last words. Then he died.

Saul was right there, congratulating the killers . . .

^{8:3} And Saul just went wild, devastating the church, entering house after house after house, dragging men and women off to jail . . .

^{9:1} All this time Saul was breathing down the necks of the Master's disciples, out for the kill. He went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to take to the meeting places in Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the Way, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem.

³⁻⁴ He set off. When he got to the outskirts of Damascus, he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light. As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?"

⁵⁻⁶ He said, "Who are you, Master?"

"I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next."

⁷⁻⁹ His companions stood there dumbstruck — they could hear the sound, but couldn't see anyone — while Saul, picking himself up off the ground, found himself stone-blind. They had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. He continued blind for three days. He ate nothing, drank nothing.

¹⁰ There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of Ananias. The Master spoke to him in a vision: "Ananias."

"Yes, Master?" he answered.

¹¹⁻¹² "Get up and go over to Straight Avenue. Ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus. His name is Saul. He's there praying. He has just had a dream in which he saw a man named Ananias enter the house and lay hands on him so he could see again."


¹³⁻¹⁴ Ananias protested, "Master, you can't be serious. Everybody's talking about this man and the terrible things he's been doing, his reign of terror against your people in Jerusalem! And now he's shown up here with papers from the Chief Priest that give him license to do the same to us."

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ But the Master said, "Don't argue. Go! I have picked him as my personal representative to non-Jews and kings and Jews. And now I'm about to show him what he's in for — the hard suffering

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that goes with this job.”


¹⁷⁻¹⁹ So Ananias went and found the house, placed his hands on blind Saul, and said, “Brother Saul, the Master sent me, the same Jesus you saw on your way here. He sent me so you could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” No sooner were the words out of his mouth than something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes — he could see again! He got to his feet, was baptized, and sat down with them to a hearty meal.

 From this point forward [Acts 13:9 (↓)] in the Biblical narrative of *the Acts of the Apostles*, the author Doctor Luke refers to Saul as Paul. (Perhaps, the repentant Paul used the name change to further distance himself from his previous life as a persecutor of Believers of “The Way”.)

Acts 13:9-12 [English Standard Version (ESV)] [Paul was ministering throughout the Island of Cyprus and arrived at the City of Paphos]

⁹ But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him [Elymas, who was a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, also called Bar-Jesus, and was an attendant to the proconsul Sergius Paulus] ¹⁰ and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? ¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.”

Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

 a·pos·tle (ə-pōs’əl) n.

1. a. Apostle: One of a group made up especially of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus to preach the gospel.
1. b. A missionary of the early Christian Church.
1. c. A leader of the first Christian mission to a country or region.

1 Corinthians 9:1 [NIV-1984]


Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?

Romans 1:1-5 [NIV-1984]

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God -- ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

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Day 2

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² and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:

Q4. To whom was Paul writing?




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³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age,
according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and
ever. Amen.

Q5. Did Paul include the Gospel message in his opening? If yes, what did he write?

Day 3

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There Is No Other Gospel

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you
by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel -- ⁷ which is
really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into
confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Q6. The niceties are over. What is Paul's concern and the reason for this letter (epistle)?

Concern?


Reason?

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Q7. This seems to be a recurring theme. Paul evangelizes, starts a church, ensures that it is grounded in the Gospel of Christ Jesus, departs, and the church degrades in its core beliefs [e.g., 1st Corinthians]. Who (or what) is “[perverting] the gospel of Christ”? And why?

Who or what?

Why?

 Verse 6: “you . . . are turning to a different gospel”: “Another gospel do I call it? That would seem to concede its right to be called a gospel at all. It might be supposed to be some alternative theory, existing side by side with that which you originally heard; but this cannot be. This “other gospel” is not a second gospel; for there cannot be two gospels. The inference, therefore, to be drawn is that it is not a gospel in any sense of the word. This, then, may be dismissed. It is no true gospel, but only mischievous and factious meddling on the part of certain false teachers.” [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J Ellicott. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/galatians/1-6.htm>]

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!


Q8. Is there significance in Paul’s repeated consequence – “let him be eternally condemned”?

Q9. Why does Paul have such harsh words – “eternally condemned” – for someone who might preach an alternative gospel message?

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James 3:1 [NIV-1984] [This epistle was written by the Apostle James, who was also the Lord Jesus' half-brother.]

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

 While the Apostle John's words (↓) conclude the Book of Revelation, there is a parallel in that these words apply to the text of the Holy Bible. If anyone is to teach, they must adhere to the Gospel message. While I am the author of these notes, I am also human and mistake-prone. I do my absolute best to use Scripture to support any teaching. I use Scripture to support Scripture. And I frequently pray that the Lord – the Holy Spirit – will correct any mistakes that I may introduce into these StudySheets and associated discussion sessions. I fervently believe that a simple explanation of Scripture is best, while a convoluted argument to support a Biblical point is error-prone.

Revelation 22:18-19 [NIV-1984]

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Q10. In verse 8, Paul wrote the “gospel . . . we preached to you” and in verse 9 the “gospel . . . you accepted”. It seems that the false gospel was enticing to church-goers for the Galatians eschewed the true Gospel for a false narrative. How are we today able to recognize a false gospel and repudiate it?

Acts 17:11 [NIV-1984]

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.


¹⁰ Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Q11. When you think about sharing the Gospel message with someone, do you hesitate because you believe the conversation will be awkward or the recipient will be hostile to the message? In other words, do you seek the approval of men and/or women?

1 Samuel 8:7^a [NIV-1984] [God answers the Prophet Samuel's prayer:]

And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me . . ."

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 We love our comfort, and Jesus likes us to be outside of our comfort-zone and reliant upon Him. Jesus taught that, when we minister to others in obedience to Him, we will face persecution, troubles. Satan is great at sowing discord!


Luke 6:22-23 [J.B. Phillips New Testament]

22-23 “How happy you are when men hate you and turn you out of their company; when they slander you and detest all that you stand for because you are loyal to the Son of Man. Be glad when that happens and jump for joy — your reward in Heaven is magnificent. For that is exactly how their fathers treated the prophets.

Matthew 13:18-23 [J.B. Phillips New Testament]

“Now listen to the parable of the sower. When a man hears the message of the kingdom and does not grasp it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is like the seed sown by the road-side. The seed sown on the stony patches represents the man who hears the message and eagerly accepts it. But it has not taken root in him and does not last long — the moment trouble or persecution arises through the message he gives up his faith at once. The seed sown among the thorns represents the man who hears the message, and then the worries of this life and the illusions of wealth choke it to death and so it produces no ‘crop’ in his life. But the seed sown on good soil is the man who both hears and understands the message. His life shows a good crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.


Paul Was Called By God

¹¹ I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made-up. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Q12. Paul wants the Galatians to understand that the Gospel he preached did not originate with man. Why is that distinction important?


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Q13. How should we explain Paul's statement, "I received it by revelation"?

 In Acts 9:15-16 (↑), Jesus' message to Paul via Ananias foretold that Paul would witness to "non-Jews and kings and Jews". In Acts 26:12-18 (↓), Paul is indeed speaking to non-Jews – the Roman King Agrippa and Governor Porcius Festus.

Acts 26:12-18 [NIV-1984]

¹² "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ About noon, O king [Agrippa], as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' ¹⁶ " 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

 In Acts 26:14 (↑), the NIV-1984 translation states that Jesus told Paul, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." The Message (MSG) translation states in Acts 9:4 "Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?" (↑ Page 2). In the MSG version the translators have attempted to use contemporary English in their translation. However, the translation of the NIV-1984 is more descriptive.

A goad is a pointed rod used to prod oxen and cattle to move forward and to help turn the animal to the left or right. It is a device that controls the animal through pain. Jesus observes that Paul is being goaded and resisting at the same time. In effect Paul is inflicting greater pain upon himself by fighting ("kick against") the goad and its sharp point.

Paul chose to ignore the Gospel message of Stephen (Acts 7). Paul witnessed the occurrences recorded in Acts 5:34-39 (↓); Acts 6:15 (↓); and Acts 7:60 (↓). Paul discovered that his teacher Gamaliel was correct and he was fighting against God and losing!

Acts 5:27, 34-39 [NIV-1984]

²⁷ Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest . . .

³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men [the Apostles] be put outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

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Acts 22:1-3 [The Message (MSG)] [Paul was arrested in Jerusalem. Before he was jailed, he asked to speak to the frenzied mob. Paul began with his credentials:]

¹⁻² “My dear brothers and fathers, listen carefully to what I have to say before you jump to conclusions about me.” When they heard him speaking Hebrew, they grew even quieter. No one wanted to miss a word of this.

²⁻³ He continued, “I am a good Jew, born in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, but educated here in Jerusalem under the exacting eye of Rabbi Gamaliel, thoroughly instructed in our religious traditions. And I’ve always been passionately on God’s side, just as you are right now.

Acts 6:15 [The Message (MSG)]


As all those who sat on the High Council looked at Stephen, they found they couldn’t take their eyes off him — his face was like the face of an angel!

Acts 7:59-60 [The Message (MSG)]

⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰ As the rocks rained down, Stephen prayed, “Master Jesus, take my life.” Then he knelt down, praying loud enough for everyone to hear, “Master, don’t blame them for this sin”—his last words. Then he died.

Saul was right there, congratulating the killers.

Day 6

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¹³ For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.


Q14. In what ways did Paul persecute Believers, members of ‘The way’?

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¹⁵ But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Q15. In the question following verse 11-12 (↑), we were asked about Paul's "revelation". How do verses 16-17 help answer that question?

¹⁸ Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles -- only James, the Lord's brother.

 The following passage [Acts 9:17-28 (↓)] describes Saul/Paul's ministry immediately following his conversion on the Road to Damascus. Luke, the author of *The Acts of the Apostles*, is mostly silent on Paul's "revelations" from Christ Jesus. However, the words Luke used in this Acts passage related to 'time' are vague. Paul's witness to the Galatians provides details that instills credibility to Paul's ministry.

Acts 9:17-28 [NIV-1984]

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord -- Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here -- has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

²⁰ Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

²³ After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

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²⁰ I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. ²¹ Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²² I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."
²⁴ And they praised God because of me.

Q16. Paul continues to share his credentials with the Galatians by using his employment resume (so to speak) to demonstrate his credibility. Is Paul concerned about his authenticity as an Apostle? Is Paul two-faced as he tries to receive the approval of men and women?

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