

Scripturalism vs Judaism XVI

From Saul to the Apostle Paul

Fred R. Coulter—February 26, 1994

I have a book that I would like to recommend to everyone, *A Harmony in the Life of St. Paul* by Frank J. Goodwin. It's really quite good, however, I'm disappointed in it in relationship to this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism* because it doesn't tackle it at all. It's really quite amazing. I want to do just a little bit of review and lay a little groundwork for something we'll tackle a little later down the road.

Remember we started out, beginning with John the Baptist, that God was separating Christianity through Jesus Christ from the establishment of the priests, from Judaism, from Pharisaism, from Esseneism, from Sadduceeism, and was bringing the true teachings from the Bible. The Church is called *the new Israel*. That's the way they viewed it when the Church began. We saw the confrontation that Jesus always had with the religious leaders of His day. Some of them are quite humorous, and some of them are kind of feisty, and some of them are quite profound. We know that it ended up in His crucifixion.

Let's review just a little bit concerning Peter. I think it's interesting that it is contained here in the book of Luke. We need to remember that Luke wrote for the Apostle Paul, and was the companion of the Apostle Paul.

Carl Franklin is doing all the research and his findings are so good. When we get his stuff it is literally going to blow the lid right off all of this false Christianity stuff. When we talk over the phone, we've said it's been there all the time. We are discovering nothing new, brethren, because there's nothing new under the sun; it's just that in Worldwide they have been so busy playing the politics of religion—who is in charge, who is in control, and are you in submission—that they have completely put people with good minds who can research—driven them away or put such a clamp on them that they couldn't come to the Truth.

We're finding some things about the name of God—Yahweh and Elohim—and also about the priests and Levites and what they were doing. The priests and Levites were so pagan it's incredible, and yet, they wrote in the name of Yahweh and Elohim.

This is going to be so profound that it's going to take a lot of understanding for people to grasp. We need to grasp it from this point of view: We know that God created Adam, and we know that God created Eve—correct? *Yes!*

Genesis 2:22: “Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, ‘This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.’ For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife—**and they shall become one flesh**” (vs 22-24). The whole point I want to make here is this: “...**and they shall become one flesh.**” In relationship to God, it has been cleverly twisted around that God is one person. Elohim means *more than one!*

Genesis 1:26: “And God said, ‘Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness...’”

Genesis 3:22: “And the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become **like one of Us**...’”
Not like Me!

Where it says ‘the Lord our God is one Lord,’ *one* is in the same kind of category in reference to Yahweh/Elohim is one is the same thing as husband and wife are *one*. It describes a *condition*, not counting a body. This is going to be profound what is going to be done. Carl has traced every place where they have changed the name ‘Yahweh’ to ‘Adonai’; and Adonai, according to Alexander Hislop’s *Two Babylons* was one of the gods of Babylon. They did worship *one* god. This is going to be something, brethren! Why can you only have one God or three God’s—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three Gods—but you can’t have two, when the Bible clearly teaches two?—correct? *Yes!* This is going to be something!

Just like going through this series there are so many things that we just miss, and so many of the teachers and brethren have missed, because they are so concerned with the *politics of religion* and playing church that they don’t study the Word of God. I want to present just a couple of things here today in the way of summary before we get into the Apostle Paul’s life, because we have to ask—which has never really been satisfactorily answered:

- Why does the New Testament end up with 14 epistles from the Apostle Paul?
- Why does the book of Acts start out showing all the apostles and mainly Peter, and then all of a sudden shifts gears to bring us the account of the Apostle Paul, who was called Saul?
- Why? *The answer is buried right here in the New Testament!*

I want to do a little background on this, because

what I want to do in this sermon is show the leadership that Peter had. We'll just survey a couple of places and little bit in the book of Acts. We need to understand what was going on, because the apostles understood what Christ was teaching to a much greater degree than we realize. They understood that they were going to rule with Him in the Kingdom of God. They understood that there was going to be quite a bit they were doing.

Luke 22:21: "Behold, even *now* the hand of him who is betraying Me *is* with Me at the table; and the Son of man indeed goes, according as it has been appointed, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!' Then they began to question this among themselves, which of them it might be who was about to do this" (vs 21-23). Isn't that something! They didn't even know who it was. Did Judas do a good number on all of them? *Yes!*

To read that statement you miss the point. The point is that *no one suspected Judas*. Have we experienced things where there have been Judas' among us and we didn't know? *Yes!* They didn't know which of them would do it.

Verse 24: "And there was also an argument among them..." That means there was a debate. This, brethren, is at the Passover that they took. Right here at the table, here's this debate. We know what was going on a day or two before that, because the mother of James and John came to Jesus and said, 'Oh, Lord, I'm asking one little favor.' He said, 'What's that?' *That my sons, one may sit at your right hand and one at your left hand.* He said, 'Woman you don't know what you're asking; that's for the Father to give.' Let's understand what's going on here. They *knew* that there were going to be things given to them that they were going to do.

"...even this: which of them should be considered *the greatest*" (v 24). Who should be accounted the greatest? So, they had this big strife going on like little kids out there: Who's the strongest? Who's the toughest? Who's the fastest?

Verse 25: "And He said to them, 'The kings of the nations lord over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.'" We don't have to expound that very much. We know that. I've expounded that quite a bit in *Lord, What Should I Do?* that the reason Jesus was showing on the Passover night that this kind of thing was not going to be allowed in His Church, because it leads to the disaster that we see unfolding before our faces right now.

Verse 26: "But *it shall* not be this way among you; rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving. For who *is* greater, the one who is sitting *at the table*, or the one who is serving?"

Is not the one who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who is serving" (vs 26-27). That's quite a statement when you understand what God gave up to become a human being so that we could have our sins forgiven, that we could be brought into the fellowship with God the Father. That's profound!

Verse 28: "Now you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom; so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Then the Lord said, '**Simon, Simon, listen well. Satan has demanded to have you...**'" (vs 28-31). This is quite a statement! Not said of the other apostles. Satan knew what he wanted.

"...to sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.' And he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.'" (vs 31-33). He had quite a bit of human leadership. This is really quite a statement! It shows some vulnerability here, which we could see in some other places concerning Peter. It shows that he was going to be a leader. It also shows that he was willing to dedicate his life, but it also shows that he didn't know what he had to be dedicated to and the way that he ought to have been. Christ was going to teach him a lesson:

Verse 34: "But He said, 'I tell you, Peter, *the cock* shall in no wise crow today before you have denied knowing Me three times.'" Luke is the only one who records the account that when the cock crowed the last time and he denied Christ, that Jesus looked him right in the eye! Of course, it says that Peter went out and bitterly repented.

This shows that there is a weakness that Satan was going to get a hold of later. We won't fully understand that until we come to Gal. 2. Let's see how then he led the brethren, beginning right with the first chapter of the book of Acts. He did strengthen the brethren! He did lead them, He and John together. We'll just survey certain places where it shows that Peter undoubtedly was leading. It's very important for us to realize this.

Acts 1:13: "And after entering *Jerusalem*, they went up into the upper chamber, where both Peter and James were staying; and John and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Jude, *the brother* of James." Here it lists all eleven of the apostles after Judas had fell, and then they were to select the one who would replace Judas.

Verse 14: "All these were steadfastly continuing with one accord in prayer and

supplications, *together* with *the* women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.... [the brothers of Christ] ...And in those days, Peter stood up in *the* midst of the disciples (now *the* number of names together was about a hundred and twenty) *and* said” (vs 14-15). Here Peter was taking a leadership position. This is not to go through and show the primacy of Peter. If you attempt to show the primacy of Peter, you must also show the fall of Peter. When we get to Gal. 2, we’re going to see that that fall was tremendous, and it created great problems for the Church. We’re going to look at his leadership at the beginning.

Acts 2:14: “Then Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them...” Peter was the one who was doing the speaking, the preaching.

Verse 37: “Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you...’” (vs 37-38). We see Peter being the leading spokesman all the way through.

Acts 3:1: “Now Peter and John...” We see at first Peter being the spokesman. John was helping him all the way through—wasn’t he?

Verse 4: “But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’”

Verse 6: “...In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk.”

Verse 12: “And when Peter saw *it*, he answered to the people, ‘Men, Israelites, why are you wondering at this?....’”

Acts 4:8: “Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel.’”

Verse 13: “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men, they were amazed...”

That’s the way they view all of the ministers of God, because they didn’t go to their universities. When the leaders of the Church of God go to the universities of this world to find out how they understand God and bring it back into the Church, it’s truly the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees! It’s not what God wants; He wants us to be motivated by His Spirit.

Verse 19: “But Peter and John answered *and* said to them...” So, Peter and John were both talking. Mostly Peter, but what I want to focus in on is how God blessed him with works of miracles above all the other apostles. This becomes important

for us to understand because of the shift that is going to take place when we get a little bit later into this sermon from Peter and John to Paul and Barnabas and later to Paul.

Acts 5:3—when they were bringing in the money and laying it at the apostles’ feet. This is the story of Ananias and Sapphira: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *part* of the price of the estate?’”

Verse 5: “And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired...”

Verse 4: “...‘You have not lied to men, but to God.’”

Verse 8: “And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me if you sold the estate for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘Why *is it* that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of *the* Lord? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband *are* at the door, and they shall carry you out.’ And she immediately fell down at his feet and expired. And the young men came in and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole Church, and upon all who heard these things” (vs 8-11). I guess so!

Verse 12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women)” (vs 12-14). In one place it says there were 5,000.

Stop and think for a minute. How many Pharisees were there during the days of Jesus? *Josephus says there were 6,000!* They really did not have the kind of power that the Jews today indicate that they did. How many priests and Levites were there? *20,000!* So, we look at 26-30-thousand priests, Levites, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. Here comes the Church of God getting thousands and thousands! This created problems!

Verse 15: “Insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least **the shadow of Peter**... [not the apostles, but Peter; God was doing something through Peter] ...passing by might overshadow some of them. And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and they were all healed*” (vs 15-16).

Verse 18: “And they laid their hands on the apostles... [Peter and John] ...and put them in *the* public hold.”

Verse 29: “But Peter and the apostles answered...” It specifically singles out what Peter said. This is quite something!

Acts 6—we have the selecting of the first deacons.

Why is it that God says that ‘vengeance is Mine, I will repay’? Because sometimes God’s vengeance, and sometimes God’s way of doing something is entirely different from our way. We will see when we get into Acts 9 and why this is so.

Acts 8:1—after the stoning of Stephen: “Now Saul had consented to killing him. And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that was in Jerusalem; and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” They had to really get out of town!

Verse 2: “And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was **ravaging** the Church... [the Greek word here means *like a wild boar* that goes in and tears and roots everything out! Have you ever seen what a wild boar can do? *They can just tear things apart!* That’s what it means.] ...**going from house to house**...” (vs 2-3).

Saul was the ‘SS’ Heinrich Himmler storm trooper for the high priest; that’s what he was going into the houses, banging on the doors, finding out who was following *the way!* The only way that Saul could cart any of them off was that *they didn’t deny that they were following Christ*, which then puts a great question mark for us. **If they come banging on our door, what are we going to say?** It would be easy to deny it so you wouldn’t get carted off, but then what’s going to happen later? ***Just think about that!***

“...entering in and dragging *out* men and women, *and* delivering *them* up to prison.” (v 3). I want us to think about something concerning Judaism today. I want us to think about what is happening to every form of Christianity. I want us to think about why do we always have the Holocaust stuffed in our face when *we* did not do it? Why not do it in Germany instead of here?

I got a call from a man who read the report in *The Ambassador Report* and it was really quite a compliment. He was the one who wrote an article in *Christianity Today* concerning what’s happening Worldwide Church of God. I talked to him a little bit and sure enough he was a Jew. He had to tell me his genetic and his genital status. I thought about that later—I’m not going to say anything in the letter I write back to him—but I filed this away in the back of mind: How many people do you know that on a phone call with a stranger they let you know their genetic and their genital status? How would it be if I

picked the phone up and I said, ‘Oh, guess what, I’m a Jew and I’m circumcised’? *So what!* I don’t have blacks pick up the phone and call me and say ‘I’m black and I’m a Gentile and uncircumcised—hooray for me!’ I don’t have Chinese calling up and saying, ‘I’m Chinese, yellow and uncircumcised—hooray for me!’

Why is that every Jew has got to tell us their genetic and genital status. It blew my mind! I think I can tell you why: They want to identify wherever we are, because they are going to perpetrate the holocaust upon us! They plan to do to Christians what was done to them. That’s why! And the next time any Jew does that to me, I’m going to land on them with all fours, and I’m going to say: When you run a movie produced by Spielberg and show us what Marx and Engle and Lenin and Cesky and Schiff and Khun and Loeb have done to this world with Communism and have killed ten times more than the Jews that were—if there were actually six million killed—then come and tell me your genetic and your genital status and I will be happy to receive you. Until then, stuff it in your ear! I don’t want hear a word about it, because that doesn’t mean anything to Christ.

Christ told those Jews through John the Baptist that said ‘we be Abraham’s seed’ *Don’t come and say you’re Abraham’s seed, because God can raise up children of these stones to Abraham; you have no status before God!*

It just irritated me to no end. I thought about that. You know how you do when something like that happens, you run hot and cold, but a total stranger has to tell me that over the phone, just blew my mind. What we’re reading here, brethren, is going to happen to us, and the ones who are going to be the leaders in doing it are going to be the very ones who think that they have suffered because of the holocaust and they’re going to come with glee and enter into the houses and drag us out and kill us. It’s going to happen!

Verse 4: “Therefore, those who were scattered passed through *everywhere*, preaching the Word of the Gospel.... [So, if you can get out of the house, go!] ...Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them” (vs 4-5) and so forth. You know the whole story concerning Simon Magus. Let’s understand something concerning Simon Magus: As I brought out in *The Christian Passover* book, the original ones at the temple in Samaria were really renegade Levites of the sons of Levi who set up the priesthood there.

Simon Magus was the one who was at the temple there. So, it was a mixture of Gentilism and Leviticalism and so forth. Carl Franklin is finding that the Essenes were Levites. The Essenes went to a solar

calendar. We're finding all kinds of things—he is—that you won't believe when we get it out. Yes, Simon Magus was one of the authors of heresy. Yes, the followers of Simon Magus did create a lot of problems with the Church. Yes, true! But there were others who did, which we'll cover in this series. What did they do when they found out that Simon was baptized:

Verse 14: “Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who, after coming down to *Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 14-17).

Peter was the one who really lambastes Simon Magus—right? He tells him, ‘You’re not going to by the gift of God with money; you’re in an attitude of gall and bitterness. You pray that none of these things come upon you.’ Simon said, ‘Oh, you pray for me that they don’t.’ Then we have the rest of Acts 8 showing about what they did.

Acts 9:1—Here we have the vengeance of God against Judaism beginning. “Now Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest... [You’ve always got to do it legally—right? *Yes!* So, Paul went to the high priest to do it legally.] ...asking him *for* letters *to take* to the synagogues at Damascus... [When you are in the synagogue and you got a letter from the high priest, everybody stood at attention and did what the high priest ordered.] ...so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem” (vs 1-2).

God had other plans for Saul. What greater revenge against Judaism than to have the leading rabbi to be converted? Think on that! This is pretty powerful stuff! We have the account of his conversion:

Verse 3: “But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And after falling to the ground, he heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting....’” (vs 3-5). You talk about a first hand message, directly from Christ! What the Apostle Paul did, when he was later the Apostle Paul, to separate Judaism from Christianity was so profound, and it had to be that it was separated.

To guarantee that there would not be Pharisaim and Judaism in the Church, what did God do? *He chose the leading Pharisee, the leading*

rabbi, the most zealot against the Church and converted him; and then sent him to preach the grace and the love of God. Did Paul understand grace? *You bet he did!* He knew that he was one of the greatest recipients of the grace of God! That’s not the way we would judge it. If each one of us had to judge Saul, we would say to line him up and execute him—right? *Yes!* But God had greater plans. What more frustrating thing to do to Judaism and the Pharisees could you possible devise than to convert the leading antagonist, the leading rabbi and the most zealous in Judaism? That’s something!

Knocked him right off his horse or donkey, or off his feet—whatever! God took care of him! God has a way of doing things.

Verse 6: “Then, trembling and astonished, he said, ‘Lord, what will You have me to do?’...” You know the ‘jig is up’ when you’re caught in the hand of Christ.

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“...And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.’ Now the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; *for* they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Then Saul arose from the ground; but when he opened his eyes, he saw no one.... [he was made blind] ...And they led him by the hand and brought *him* to Damascus. But *for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink” (vs 6-9).

- I wonder what he prayed during that time?
- I wonder what he thought of during that time?
- I wonder what Christ put into his mind that brought him to complete repentance?

You think about that!

Verse 10: “Now there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, I *am here*, Lord.’... [This has got to come straight from God, because this could be a trap otherwise. Everyone knew the reputation of Saul. Even Ananias did.] ...And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight... [Pretty interesting street—isn’t it? ‘Straight is the way and narrow is the gate that leads to life’ (Matt. 7) and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying” (vs 10-11). I imagine so! I don’t imagine that he slept very much those three days and three nights. I imagine that not only was his mouth dry, but his tear-ducts were like sand grates by the time he finished.

Verse 12: “And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias

answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things... [the Greek there is ‘megaleios’] ...he must suffer for My name” (vs 12-16).

Isaiah 55—Let’s see if this Scripture is not fulfilled in the life of the Apostle Paul, the one who was called *Saul the Destroyer!* I imagine Saul when he was praying and fasting the three days and nights that he couldn’t see, he was reciting Isaiah 55:6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (vs 6-7). I imagine that Saul was praying that prayer over and over again.

Verse 8: “‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD.... [You could sure apply that to the Apostle Paul—can’t you? *Yes, you can!*] ...‘For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater”” (vs 8-10).

- Think about that in relationship to conversion!
- Think about that in relationship to Christ, Who is the bread!
- Think about that in relationship to the parable of the sower; of the seed going out!
- Think about that in relationship to Christ—all of it!

Verse 11: “So shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do.” That’s what God did with Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. *Quite a thing!*

We know one thing for sure, *Paul never forgot!* When he wrote about *grace*, and he wrote about *forgiveness*, *he never forgot that he was the enemy of God at one time!* He said, ‘I persecuted the Church. I did it in ignorance, but I am not fit to be called an apostle!’

Acts 9:15: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the*

children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name.’ Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying *his* hands on him, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, *even* Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with *the* Holy Spirit.’ And it was as *if* scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose *and* was baptized. And after eating food, he was strengthened. Then Saul was with the disciples in Damascus *for* a number of days. And in the synagogues he immediately began to proclaim Christ, that He is the Son of God” (vs 15-20). You talk about a 180° conversion! That was it!

Verse 21: “And all who heard *him* were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and who came here for this *purpose*, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ” (vs 21-22). Total turnaround! Absolute turnaround!

Let’s come to Galatians, the first chapter. Now we’re getting into some of the things concerning the division of Christianity and Judaism. The reason that God called Saul to be the Apostle Paul, and let him to have been the total enemy against Christ before his conversion was to serve a purpose, that the Church be not entangled in Judaism. That’s the whole purpose. God collected the #1 leading hateful, persecuting rabbi and knocked off his horse on his ‘keester’ and converted him, and it stuck! We’re going to see that there are some tremendous things here in Galatians. We’re also going to see how this ties in with Acts 9.

Galatians 1:1: “Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father... [he knew that—isn’t that right? *Yes!* It wasn’t through Peter. It wasn’t through James. It wasn’t through John, Bartholomew or any of the others. *It was by Christ!* Christ knocked him off his horse!] ...Who raised Him from *the* dead; and all the brethren who are with me, to the Churches of Galatia” (vs 1-2).

What does this also reveal? *That before writing this epistle of Galatians, the Apostle Paul conferred with all the brethren at Antioch!* We’re going to see why this was written from Antioch.

Verse 3: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen.” (vs 3-5).

The Apostle Paul had to have a tremendous

conviction of God's Spirit as well as an uncompromising, apolitical mind. That becomes very important, because we're going to see that Peter—because of politics—almost destroyed the Church of God. We have to get all the facts together before we come to that, but we will see that. This is why he's most emphatic here.

Verse 6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are **desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ**" (vs 6-7). Brethren, we better be ready to stand for the Gospel of Christ, because there be many that pervert it. There be many that twist it and turn it and malign it.

It's like this letter I read to you before the sermon: 'I've been in the church about eight years and they're destroying the Truth so fast, I don't even know where to find it anymore. Can you help me?' Well, that why the book *Lord, What Should I Do?* Pervert the Gospel: that means to twist it, to turn it, to use the name of Christ but bring in something else.

Verse 8: "But if **we**... [including all the apostles; there's a reason for saying *we*] ...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!"

That is strong, strong language. Please understand, brethren, **this is the Gospel according to Christ**, not according to a version of man. I'm so tired of hearing people uphold men who have perverted the Gospel, or changed the Gospel, or misdirected the Gospel and say that they're going to follow that man. I'm here to tell you that unless you follow Christ, you're going to be in difficulties and problems. That's what Paul is saying here very clearly.

I want us to understand the severity of what Paul did. Remember all the miracles that Peter accomplished. As we're going to see, this becomes much more profound when we do a little bit more on Peter, and see that God first sent Peter to the Gentiles—correct? *Yes!* There's a reason why that is brought out in the book of Acts. It's very important.

Galatians 2:11: "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face..." This was so serious that it could not be done in private. I don't know of any problem, yet, that I've confronted with a minister that needs to be held out in public. There may be some, but not to this extent. This was so profound that God saw fit to preserve it in the Scriptures. This potentially had such far-reaching ramifications that it had to be preserved.

To let you know something, Peter received

the epistles from Paul and put his two epistles with it where he commended Paul—"brother Paul"—remember that? Peter did not edit Gal. 2 and passed it on to John. Do you think that if I would send a letter to Pasadena, or to Tyler, TX, or wherever, and excoriate some minister publicly for his stance, that he would include it in his next mailing? Let alone preserve it in Scripture? *Of course not!*

"...because **he was to be condemned**; for before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles.... [This was Peter's Achilles' heel. He played politics.] ...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision party. And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy" (vs 11-13).

Galatians 1:8: "But if **we**... [he's including the apostles; Peter, Barnabas or any minister of God] ...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? **For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ**" (vs 8-10).

And may every one of the brethren understand that, and may in particular every minister understand that. ***If you seek to please men, you are committing idolatry, because you are putting men in place of God!*** Think on that! That's how serious this thing with Scripturalism and Judaism really is. There are many lessons that come out to every one of us. The main one here is that if you aim to please men you are playing politics. Have we not seen what happened to the Church of God because of politics time and time again! *Yes, indeed!*

If you please men, you just count that you are not a servant of God. That means when it comes to preaching the true Gospel of Christ, upholding the love of God, the grace of God and substitute the religious works of men and that's what Judaism was trying to do.

Verse 11: "But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the* revelation of Jesus Christ" (vs 11-12).

That's why Saul was chosen—the leading rabbi, the most powerful one in Judaism—to convert him. It had to be taught directly to Paul. Why did it have to be preached directly to him? *So that he could understand that Judaism had no standing in the Church of God!* Just like those who are called into

the Church of God today are called out of Catholicism and out of Protestantism, so the Christians then were called out of Judaism. He had to be taught by revelation of Jesus Christ. We will see that was for three years in the Arabian Desert.

Verse 13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [In the Greek it really mean *in Judaism*. And some of the more modern translations will have it that way. He never forgot it!] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers” (vs 13-14). Very important! None of those God-rejecting traditions were going to be carried into the Church of God!

Verse 15: “But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by His grace, to reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years...” (vs 15-18). This is showing he was out there for three years, taught of Christ, by vision, by dream, by revelation.

How profound was this revelation and these visions and dreams by which Christ personally taught Paul? This is far different than the one man who claimed that he had a revelation given to him by God directly, when all he did was go to a library in Portland. Granted, he learned some things there, that’s true. Granted, God used him, but he certainly didn’t run off to a desert someplace, and he certainly didn’t have Christ talk to him directly. So, there is no parallel here; please understand! Do we seek to please men? *or* God? These things must be said. Not hatefully! Not spitefully! But, in fact and in truth, with forceful forthrightness that we don’t get caught up in idolizing a human being.

2-Corinthians 12:1: “Indeed, it is not expedient for me to boast. But I will come to visions and revelations of *the* Lord. I know a man in Christ *who*, fourteen years ago, was caught up to *the* third heaven. (Whether *this man was* in *the* body, I do not know; or out of the body, I do not know—God knows). Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the* body, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise [third heaven]...” (vs 1-4).

That’s profound teaching; and it was so real, it was so vivid that he said he couldn’t tell whether he ‘was in the body or out of the body’ when this took place. It had a profound and lasting effect on him.

Verse 3: “Now, I know such a man (whether *taken up* in *the* body, or out of the body, I do not know—God knows), *and* that he was caught up to Paradise, and heard unutterable sayings, which a man is not permitted to speak” (vs 3-4). He heard a lot of things that he was told not even to write or speak about again. That’s overwhelming!

Any of us who get all lifted up in our great vanity and we start putting our thumbs on our suspenders and lifting ourselves up by our bootstraps and saying how great we are, we’d better read this, because we haven’t even gotten to the sand that’s kicked outside the sandbox, let alone even crawled over the edge of the sandbox to get in—right? *Right!*

Verse 5: “I will boast of such a one as this; but of myself I personally will not boast, except concerning my weaknesses.” He learned to understand about his infirmities and sufferings and the great things that he suffered. Brethren, I’m here to submit to you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ could not have been written and preserved for us unless it was done by the Apostle Paul through the things that he suffered. That’s why we have 14 epistles by Paul and not 14 by Peter. That might be fighting words with some people. Give me a chance!

Verse 6: “But even if I choose to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will speak the Truth. However, I will forbear, lest anyone think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or what he hears from me.” If he told what he knew, just think what people would say. ‘We know this man; he was in the third heaven and talked to God directly. Boy, this is wonderful man, we’ll follow him.’ NO! He didn’t want any of that! They also knew that he didn’t want any of his vanity getting the better of him.

Verse 7: “But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted.” That may be an eye condition; a health condition. He had that personal suffering going on. I think when you go through this, we all need to look at our own difficulties and our own suffering that we are going through and ask God to help us understand the things we’re going through, so that we can come to the attitude that the Apostle Paul had.

Verse 8: “I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me; but He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought

to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted [chief] *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing” (vs 8-11).

And ‘chief’ doesn’t mean Peter, that means a super high degree of *false apostles* of 2-Cor. 11. That’s really something! The Apostle Paul wrote some powerful things. He said here that it was by revelation in the Arabian Desert and neither did he go up to Jerusalem.

Let’s come back to Galatians 1:18: “Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I did not see *any* of the other apostles, except James the brother of the Lord. (Now the things that I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am not lying)” (vs 18-20). There were some profound things happening in the Church.

I think out of deference to Paul writing Galatians that Luke did not contain that three-year period here in Acts 9, leaving it to Paul to write about.

Acts 9:23: “Now when many days were fulfilled... [That has reference to the three years that he was in the Arabian Desert and the dreams and revelations.] ...the Jews consulted together to kill him. But their plot was made known to Saul. And they were watching the gates both day and night, in order that they might kill him. Then the disciples took him by night *and* let *him* down by the wall, lowering *him* in a basket” (vs 23-25). Talk about fleeing from city to city, this is something! This is the Christian elevator: rope and basket.

Verse 26: “And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself to the disciples; but all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took him *and* brought *him* to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he spoke and disputed with the Greeks... [Hellenists Jews] ...but they attempted to kill him” (vs 26-29).

You know he was teaching immediately that all these works and all these rituals and all these things would not bring you salvation.

Verse 30: “And when the brethren learned of *it*, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.” Saul’s impact on the Church was so profound that even after three years he couldn’t go back and teach in Jerusalem; they were ready to kill him.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:22-24
- 2) Genesis 1:26
- 3) Genesis 3:22
- 4) Luke 22:21-34
- 5) Acts 1:13-15
- 6) Acts 2:14, 37-38
- 7) Acts 3:1, 4, 6, 12
- 8) Acts 4:8, 13, 19
- 9) Acts 5:3, 5, 4, 8-16, 18, 29
- 10) Acts 8:1-5, 14-17
- 11) Acts 9:1-16
- 12) Isaiah 55:6-11
- 13) Acts 9:15-22
- 14) Galatians 1:1-8
- 15) Galatians 2:11-13
- 16) Galatians 1:8-18
- 17) 2 Corinthians 12:1-11
- 18) Galatians 1:18-20
- 19) Acts 9:23-30

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 6
- Matthew 7
- 2 Corinthians 11

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Harmony in the Life of St. Paul* by Frank J. Goodwin
- *Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Lord, What Should I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter
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- *Ambassador Report*
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