



**SERIES: WE ARE FREE: A STUDY OF GALATIANS**

**SPEAKER: Dan Coke**

**Monday, December 12, 2022**

**Scripture: Galatians 1:13–16**

**Title: The Apostolic Gospel**

Galatians 1:13–16 (ESV):

For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone.

Have you ever heard the phrase: “*You are what you eat?*” Does that sound familiar to you? The idea that the foods we eat can impact our entire being. It can impact our energy levels, attitude and even the function of our body’s cells. Things like our muscles, bones, skin and even our hair is impacted by what we eat.

The phrase: “*You are what you eat;*” doesn’t mean much to us when we’re young and vibrant, but as we age, it holds a lot of weight. Pun intended.

In the same way that food impacts our entire being, the Gospel or our understanding of the Gospel will impact every aspect of our being. Paul’s letter to the Galatians is one of my favorites. He fiercely contends for “The Apostolic Gospel” and his own authority to preach it. In the passage we just read, it is clear that the Gospel has had a massive impact on Paul’s life. Let’s take a look at what he says.

In verse 13, he says, “You heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.” We’re all in awe of this confession. How? What? Of course we have the details recorded in Acts 9. But think about this for a second. When someone seems like a really bad person, it’s easy to overlook the fact that that person needs the Gospel. How many times have we written someone off as being beyond God’s ability to save because they seem too evil or too bad? Of course, we won’t say it, but we will think it. Paul is not naive, he understands that though he was vile and wicked, it pleased God to reveal Christ to him. The Apostolic Gospel that Paul received is one he believes should be offered freely to all.

Secondly, Paul not only believes that Christ should be offered freely to all, but he believes the Apostolic Gospel is able to penetrate the hardest of hearts. Why would I say that? Because it was true of what happened in Paul’s life. The Christ that he once persecuted, he’s now willing to die for. The Judaism that he was not only zealous for, but was willing to kill for, he has now laid it

down that he might pursue Christ with all his heart. The Apostolic Gospel has changed everything about Paul's being.

Lastly, the Apostolic Gospel that Paul imbibed and that Paul preached, exalted God's sovereignty and grace above and beyond anything in himself. I mean, doesn't it seem odd that a violent, persecutor of the church would boldly declare in verse 15, "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace."

How could Paul say such a thing? The audacity of this former persecutor! But that's the key! The Apostolic Gospel is offered freely to all, is able to penetrate the hardest of hearts and make repentant sinners boast in the sovereignty and wisdom and grace of God. Paul didn't become a preacher of this Gospel because he all of a sudden wised up. He became a preacher of this Gospel because a sovereign God, before the creation of the world, appointed him to this task. So, when by God's grace he beheld Christ, everything changed, better yet, everything fell into place as God had ordained it.

The Apostolic Gospel, which is simply the "biblical Gospel," impacts every aspect of our being. If the gospel you cling to does not lead to a greater hunger to know God, to know God's Word, to set you free from the power of sin and empower you to be a witness for Christ, then perhaps you don't have the biblical, Apostolic Gospel. I pray that God would make this clear for you.