

“The Breakdown” | Interpretation Using the Original Language

How to Study the Epistles of the New Testament | Course 4

As we covered in part 1, the 2nd part of the Inductive Bible Study Method is where we begin to interpret the text. Now that we have our Context Outline already completed, we have some suspicions on what the context and sub-contexts of Paul's epistle to the Galatians are. In this second part of our study, what I like to call “the Breakdown,” we look at the original language of some keywords in each verse. By studying some of the original language, we let the verses speak for themselves and see if our suspicions about the epistle were correct—or not.



To find the Greek words and definitions we will be using the **Strong's Concordance app**! (Image above.) It's a FREE and easy way to study the Greek of the New Testament! You can find it in your mobile app store! If you prefer the Strong's Concordance book and have a copy, that will work too. Otherwise, the app is **FREE**.

The Breakdown

For this study, we will look up the Greek for specific key words of each verse. They will be **black bold.*

Words from the Greek language will be in **bold blue.*

The Introduction—V1-2

Paul, an **apostle** (not from men nor through man, but through **Jesus Christ** and **God the Father** who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me,
To the **churches** of Galatia:

Paul – Paulos – of Latin origin, the name of a Roman and of an apostle. Paul, Paulus.

an apostle - apostolos - ambassador of the Gospel, commissioned (personally) by Christ. A delegate. One who is sent. *The distinction of an apostle called by Christ and from any other Christian called by Christ is that an apostle is called by Christ in Person. It's questionable that Jesus has shown up to anyone since the early church apostles and sent them out. I don't believe Scripture teaches that as likely or possible. But that's a side issue and you can take your stance on that however you want.*

not of men (anthropos - human being) or by man (anthropos - human being)

A furtherance of the distinction of Paul's apostolic ministry. Which Paul is going to continue to build when he says...

But through Jesus

Jesus - iesous – Jesus, the name of our Lord

-and-

God – theos - a deity especially the supreme Deity

the Father – pater – a father (literally or figuratively near or more remote) father, parent

So what does this confirm for us:

1. That Paul was called to be an apostle literally by Jesus Christ and God the Father. *When Paul introduces himself this way in any of his epistles, he is not speaking figuratively or by some distance of implication. He was not called by men or any human being on earth or anywhere else (in Heaven). Paul was literally called by Christ to be an apostle.*
2. The definition of the Greek Paul used in regards to Jesus tells us that Christ is Lord. And the definitions of the Greek word Paul used for God is “the Supreme Deity.” So there is no mistaking that Paul's ministry and gospel message is from the highest authority—originating and endorsed by the Supreme God.

Speculation:

I wonder if at this point already in Paul's introduction, after doubting Paul and his gospel message, they were starting to get that they had made a serious error in ever questioning Paul and his gospel?

(To the churches of Galatia:)

Churches – **ekklesia** – a calling out, that is a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both) assembly, church.

(*Clarification: Jews who practice the Old Covenant are not a part of the "Church" today. The word *ekklesia* simply could be used in reference to a "church" or a religious congregation. Just like you could say LGBTQ "church" or a satanic "church." *(Not recommending either one!)* But Paul is clearly using "Church" in reference specifically to the **Body of believers in Christ—in Galatia.**)

By telling us "**to the churches in Galatia,**" Paul confirms for us who he is speaking to. Paul is speaking to Christians! Not potential converts who were steered in the wrong direction by others prior to genuine faith in Christ. He is talking to saved people, people who belong to the "ekklesia" the Church, just as you and I do today! So what does that tell us? We could be led astray to a gospel that doesn't save even after we first believe the correct gospel.

A lot of time, as Christians, we read the epistles or the gospels about disciples and believers who went astray, and we want to assume that those people were not really saved. But the text doesn't teach that here in Paul's epistle to the Galatians. Paul's specific use of the Greek language speaks directly to those who knew Christ and were a part of his body—the Church. Therefore, we can only conclude from Scripture that it is possible for believers to veer from the truth of the gospel and lose their way as the text tells us the Galatians did.

You may be surprised that that is possible or that is actually happening. If so, you share Paul's amazement!

If we skip down further to the meat of the letter,...

Paul says in **V6-7**

I **marvel** that you are turning away so **soon** from Him who **called** you in the grace of Christ, to a **different gospel**, which is not another; but there are some who **trouble** you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

I “**marvel**” - **thaumazo** - to wonder, by implication to admire, to have admiration, marvel, wonder

Soon - **tacheos** - immediately, quickly, rapidly

Clue:

A hint of the timeframe of Paul’s epistle to the Galatians. How is it that Paul can say “so soon” in regards to the Galatians turning to another gospel? It is because Paul was just with the Galatians. Otherwise it could not have been a “marvel” to Paul that they would turn away so quickly.

from him (Christ) who “called” (you) - **kaleo** - call, to bid, to call someone by their surname.

to another - **heteros** - alter, other, different, some, strange

gospel - **euaggelion** - good news, gospel

trouble – **tarasso** - stir, agitate, trouble

Let’s hang out here a minute on this idea that some were troubling the Galatians. Specifically on the word “stir.”

“Trouble” could have also just as easily been translated stir.

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

stir -

1. a. to cause an especially slight movement or change of position of.
Did those who troubled the Galatians cause “a movement or change of position of” in the faith of the Galatians—turning them away from Paul’s teachings? Yes!

2. to disturb the quiet of : AGITATE *Did those who troubled the Galatians disturb the quiet or peace the Galatians had when they placed their faith in Christ alone? Yes!*

(definitions 2 and 3 regarded “mixing”)

4. to bring into notice or debate : RAISE *Did those who troubled the Galatians bring into notice or debate Paul’s credentials as an apostle and the authenticity of his gospel? Yes!*
5. to rouse to activity : evoke strong feelings in. *Did those who troubled the Galatians rouse them to activity or evoke strong feelings in them? We would imagine if they came to find out that Paul may have deceived them with an inadequate gospel.*

And this really starts to speak to us now the damage, even eternally, that can be caused when people come into our local fellowship and start teaching things about Christ or Christianity that are not true or are simply divisive? ...But I’ll stop there because we’re not at the Application phase yet.

Now we could go a lot deeper into the text. But the purpose of these lessons is to equip you to be able to dive deeper into the text and enhance your personal study habits. The end result being that you learn and grow in your relationship with the Father. That being said, we can already see that there is such spiritual benefit in studying the original language of an epistle, and even revisiting our own language to open what God is trying to tell us. I encourage you to go through these examples of the Greek language again, and further as you continue your own study of Galatians. Meditate on the meaning of Paul's words and the implications of not truly understanding the Gospel.

Next lessons in **How to Study the Epistles of the New Testament:*

Phase 3: The Rewrite

Phase 4: The Application

I'll see you there!

Be blessed!

Robert

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