

## **Dr. Tim Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10 Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Tim Gombis's lecture on **Galatians 1:11-2:10** explores **Paul's assertion of his divinely-originated gospel** and **apostolic authority**. Gombis highlights how **Paul's dramatic life transformation** serves as a testament to the gospel's power to reorient one's existence. The lecture further examines **Paul's initial visit to Jerusalem**, emphasizing that his gospel was affirmed by the church leaders, who prioritized **caring for the poor**, a mission Paul also embraced. Ultimately, Gombis argues that **Paul's personal narrative** aims to demonstrate how the gospel should reshape the lives of the Galatians, moving them away from legalistic tendencies and toward a Christ-centered, outward-focused faith.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Gombis, Galatians, Session 3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Galatians).**



**Gombis\_Galatians\_  
Session03.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10

Briefing Document: Dr. Tim Gombis on Galatians 1:11-2:10

**Source:** Excerpts from "Gombis\_Galatians\_EN\_Session03.pdf"

#### **Main Themes:**

This session of Dr. Gombis' teaching on Galatians focuses on two key sections: Galatians 1:11-24, where Paul recounts the divine origin and impact of his gospel, and Galatians 2:1-10, which details his first visit to Jerusalem and his relationship with the Jerusalem apostles. The overarching theme is Paul's defense of his apostleship and the gospel he preaches, emphasizing its divine source and transformative power, particularly in its inclusion of the Gentiles. Gombis also addresses the potential for misinterpreting Paul's words as anti-Jewish.

#### **Key Ideas and Facts:**

#### **I. Galatians 1:11-24: The Divine Origin and Performance of Paul's Gospel**

- **Paul's Gospel is Divinely Originating, Not Humanly Devised:** Paul asserts that his gospel was not received from or taught by any human being but came "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). He emphasizes this divine origin to counter potential challenges to his authority and the validity of his message to the Galatians.
- **Paul's Life as a "Gospel Performance":** Gombis highlights Paul's intention to show how his own life, both before and after his conversion, serves as a demonstration of the gospel's transformative power. He states, "his life has become a revelation of Jesus Christ. His life is basically a depiction of the gospel."
- **Radical Inbreaking of God:** Gombis explains that the "revelation" Paul experienced was not merely the acquisition of new information but a "radical inbreaking into this present world order that has dramatic effects," evidenced by the dramatic transformation of Paul's life on the road to Damascus.
- **Transformation from Zealous Judaism to International Ministry:** Paul's former life in a "passionate, zealous Judaism" focused on the purity of Israel and even involved persecuting the Church (Galatians 1:13). However, the revelation of Christ led to a complete reorientation, marked by a commission to "preach the

gospel among the nations" (Galatians 1:16). This shift underscores the inclusive nature of the gospel.

- **Independence from Jerusalem Initially:** After his conversion, Paul "did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me" (Galatians 1:16-17). He spent time in Arabia and Damascus before visiting Jerusalem after three years. This highlights the divine source of his authority and his initial independent ministry.
- **Brief First Visit to Jerusalem:** Paul recounts a short visit to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, where he "became acquainted with Cephas [Peter], and I stayed with him for fifteen days. But I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1:18-19). This detail addresses potential criticisms from those claiming Paul lacked authorization from the Jerusalem leaders.
- **Impact on Judean Churches:** Despite being unknown personally to the churches in Judea, they heard of his transformation and were "glorifying God because of me" (Galatians 1:24). This demonstrates the widespread recognition of God's work in Paul's life.
- **Theological Account of a Transformed Life:** Gombis emphasizes that Paul's narrative is not just a defense but a "theological account from a gospel perspective of what life looks like that has been taken over by Jesus himself." It illustrates a shift from a focus on inherited traditions to a genuine commitment to and being transformed by the gospel.
- **Avoiding Anti-Jewish Interpretation:** Gombis argues against interpreting Paul's words as anti-Jewish. He clarifies that Paul is referring to a specific zealous subgroup within Judaism focused on purification, not Judaism as a whole. Paul himself had a "heartbroken love for his kinsmen" (Romans 9). His critique is of a misguided passion, not of the Jewish people or their heritage.

## II. Galatians 2:1-10: Paul's Visit to Jerusalem and Affirmation by the Pillars

- **Second Visit After Fourteen Years Due to Revelation:** Paul states he went up to Jerusalem again "after an interval of fourteen years" and that this journey was prompted by "a revelation" (Galatians 2:1-2). This reinforces the idea that his actions are guided by divine direction.

- **Taking Titus as a Test Case:** Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, took Titus, a Gentile, to Jerusalem as a practical demonstration of the gospel's reach to the uncircumcised.
- **Submitting His Gospel for Understanding, Not Approval:** Paul "submitted to them the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles for fear that I might be running or had run in vain" (Galatians 2:2). Gombis clarifies this was to ensure the unification of the Jewish and Gentile churches, not to seek approval for his message, which he knew was divinely given.
- **Resistance to Circumcision of Titus:** Despite pressure from "some false brothers" (Galatians 2:4), Titus was not compelled to be circumcised. This was crucial for upholding the truth that salvation comes through faith in Christ, not adherence to Jewish Law for Gentiles. Paul states they "did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you" (Galatians 2:5), directly linking this event to the situation in Galatia.
- **Distinction Between Ministry Wisdom and Gospel Offense:** Gombis clarifies the apparent contradiction with Paul circumcising Timothy in Acts 16. Timothy, being half-Jewish, was circumcised for ministry purposes to avoid unnecessary offense. Titus, a Gentile, was not circumcised because that would compromise the "offense of the gospel" – the inclusion of Gentiles based on faith alone.
- **Affirmation by the Jerusalem "Pillars":** The leaders in Jerusalem, whom Paul sarcastically refers to as "those who were of high reputation" and "reputed to be pillars" (Galatians 2:6, 9), "added nothing to me" (Galatians 2:6) in terms of instruction or authority. Instead, "recognizing the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2:9). This signifies their affirmation of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, just as Peter's was to the circumcised.
- **Paul's Sarcasm and Critique of Hero Worship:** Gombis suggests Paul's slightly sarcastic tone towards the Jerusalem leaders is not animosity but a way to address the Galatians' tendency to be swayed by the credentials and image of those coming from Jerusalem, rather than focusing on the gospel itself.
- **Shared Priority for the Poor:** The only request from the Jerusalem leaders was that Paul and Barnabas "remember the poor, the very thing I was also eager to do" (Galatians 2:10). Gombis connects this to Deuteronomy 15:7-11, highlighting the consistent biblical emphasis on caring for the needy as an integral aspect of

God's people's life in the new creation. This shared priority underscores the unity despite differing spheres of ministry.

- **Gospel Truth and Multi-Ethnic Unity:** Gombis emphasizes Paul's understanding that "the truth of the gospel is very specifically having to do with God building one multi-ethnic, multi-national people in Christ." Any prioritization of one group over others is a fundamental issue concerning the very truth of the gospel.

### **Conclusion:**

Through his personal narrative of transformation and his account of the Jerusalem visit, Paul powerfully defends the divine origin and transformative nature of his gospel. He underscores its inclusive reach to the Gentiles, affirmed even by the foundational leaders of the Jerusalem church. Gombis' analysis highlights Paul's rhetorical strategies, his theological insights into the gospel's impact on individual and community life, and the importance of avoiding interpretations that paint Paul as anti-Jewish. The session concludes by emphasizing the shared commitment to the poor as a crucial element of gospel-centered living.

## 4. Study Guide: Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10

### Galatians 1:11-2:10 Study Guide

#### Key Themes:

- **Divine Origin of Paul's Gospel:** Paul emphasizes that his gospel was received directly through a revelation from Jesus Christ, not from human sources or traditions.
- **Paul's Gospel Performance:** Paul's life before and after his conversion serves as a powerful demonstration of the transformative power of the gospel. His radical shift in priorities and actions illustrates the impact of Christ.
- **Relationship with Jerusalem Leaders:** Paul clarifies his interactions with the apostles in Jerusalem, emphasizing their eventual affirmation of his gospel and apostolic commission to the Gentiles.
- **The Truth of the Gospel and Gentile Inclusion:** Paul highlights that the core of the gospel message includes the unification of Jews and Gentiles into one body of Christ, without requiring Gentiles to become Jewish (e.g., through circumcision) for salvation.
- **Orientation of Christian Life:** The gospel reorients a believer's life from the values and priorities of the "present evil age" to those of the "new creation" in Christ.
- **Priority of the Poor:** The Jerusalem apostles and Paul agreed on the crucial importance of caring for the poor within the Christian community.

#### Quiz:

1. According to Paul, where did his gospel originate? Briefly explain the significance of this origin for his authority.
2. Describe Paul's former manner of life in Judaism before his conversion. What was the focus of his zeal?
3. What does Gombis mean by "Paul's gospel performance"? How does Paul's life serve as an example of this?
4. Why did Paul initially not consult with "flesh and blood" or go to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion? What does this reveal about his understanding of his calling?

5. What was the primary concern that motivated Paul to present his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders? What did he hope to avoid?
6. Explain the contrasting reasons why Paul circumcised Timothy but refused to have Titus circumcised. What theological principle was at stake in Titus' case?
7. How did the Jerusalem "pillars" (James, Peter, and John) respond to Paul's gospel and his ministry to the Gentiles? What did they offer as a sign of their agreement?
8. Why does Gombis suggest Paul uses slightly sarcastic language when referring to the Jerusalem "pillars"? What might be his purpose in doing so?
9. According to the lecture, what does the "truth of the gospel" specifically entail in the context of Paul's visit to Jerusalem and the issue of Titus' circumcision?
10. What was the one priority that the Jerusalem leaders asked Paul and Barnabas to focus on? How does Gombis connect this priority to a broader understanding of Christian life?

**Answer Key:**

1. Paul states that his gospel came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. This divine origin is crucial because it establishes his authority as directly from God, independent of human tradition or approval, which he emphasizes to counter those challenging his apostleship in Galatia.
2. Before his conversion, Paul lived a life intensely devoted to a specific, zealous subgroup within Judaism that sought to maintain the purity of Jewish life and traditions by resisting Hellenistic influences. His zeal was directed towards these ancestral traditions and the perceived need to persecute those he saw as threats to them, such as the early church.
3. "Paul's gospel performance" refers to how Paul's own life became a living demonstration and embodiment of the gospel's transformative power. His dramatic shift from persecutor of the church to preacher of the gospel illustrates how the gospel reorders one's entire existence and priorities, becoming a revelation of Jesus Christ in action.
4. Paul did not immediately consult with human authorities or go to Jerusalem because he understood his calling and gospel to be a direct revelation from God. This highlights his conviction that his authority and message were divinely given, not dependent on human endorsement, especially from those associated with the traditions he was now challenging.

5. Paul presented his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders not to seek their approval of its content, which he knew was divinely revealed, but to ensure that his ministry to the Gentiles would align with their ministry to the circumcised, thus preventing a division or "running in vain" within the early church and fostering unity in the body of Christ.
6. Paul circumcised Timothy, who had a Jewish mother, primarily for pragmatic, ministry-related reasons to avoid unnecessary offense among Jewish communities and facilitate his ministry. He refused to circumcise Titus, a Gentile, because doing so would imply that Gentile believers needed to adhere to Jewish Law (specifically circumcision) for salvation, which contradicted the core message of the gospel that justification comes through faith in Christ alone.
7. The Jerusalem leaders (James, Peter, and John), after recognizing the grace given to Paul for his ministry to the uncircumcised (Gentiles), affirmed his calling and gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. This act acknowledged the legitimacy and divine origin of Paul's apostleship and the validity of his gospel message to the Gentiles.
8. Gombis suggests Paul uses slightly sarcastic language towards the Jerusalem pillars to subtly challenge the Galatians' tendency to be swayed by the prestige and credentials of those who came from Jerusalem. Paul wants them to focus on the truth of the gospel itself, rather than being impressed by human status or connections.
9. The "truth of the gospel" in the context of Paul's visit to Jerusalem and Titus' circumcision specifically refers to the reality that God is creating one unified, multi-ethnic people in Christ, where ethnic distinctions (like circumcision) are no longer prerequisites for inclusion in God's covenant. It emphasizes the radical inclusion of Gentiles based solely on their faith in Jesus Christ.
10. The one priority the Jerusalem leaders asked Paul and Barnabas to focus on was remembering the poor. Gombis connects this to a broader understanding of Christian life as one that should be characterized by generosity and care for the marginalized, reflecting the values of the new creation and demonstrating a holistic transformation that extends to social responsibility.



### Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of Paul's autobiographical account in Galatians 1:11-24 for his overall argument in the letter. How does his personal transformation serve to validate his apostolic authority and the gospel he preaches to the Galatians?
2. Discuss the tension between Paul's emphasis on the divine origin of his gospel and his visit to Jerusalem as described in Galatians 2:1-10. What does this interaction reveal about Paul's understanding of authority and unity within the early church?
3. Explore the implications of Paul's stance on the circumcision of Titus for the inclusion of Gentiles in the early Christian community. How does this event highlight the core tenets of Paul's gospel message regarding salvation and ethnic identity?
4. Examine Gombis' interpretation of Paul's former life in "Judaism" within an "apocalyptic framework." How does this perspective illuminate Paul's understanding of the shift brought about by the gospel and the nature of Christian life in the "new creation"?
5. Consider the ongoing relevance of the early church's agreement on the "priority of the poor" (Galatians 2:10) for contemporary Christian communities and their engagement with social issues. How might this emphasis shape the mission and priorities of the church today?

### Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Apocalyptic:** Relating to a revelation of divine secrets or the end times, often involving a dramatic inbreaking of God's power into the present world order and the establishment of a new reality.
- **Apostolic Ministry:** The service and authority of an apostle, someone directly commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel and establish churches.
- **Divine Origin of the Gospel:** The belief that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ was directly revealed by God, not created or derived from human teachings.
- **Gospel Performance:** The idea that a believer's life, transformed by the gospel, becomes a living demonstration and embodiment of its truths and power.

- **Jerusalem Pillars:** A term referring to the prominent leaders of the early church in Jerusalem, particularly James, Peter (Cephas), and John, who were highly respected within the Jewish Christian community.
- **Justification by Faith:** The theological doctrine that individuals are declared righteous in God's sight not through their works of the law but through their faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice.
- **New Creation:** A concept in Pauline theology referring to the transformed reality brought about by Christ's death and resurrection, offering a new way of life and a renewed relationship with God.
- **Present Evil Age:** A Pauline concept describing the current state of the world characterized by sin, death, and the influence of demonic powers, from which believers are being delivered through Christ.
- **Revelation:** A direct communication or disclosure of divine truth or knowledge from God to humanity.
- **Truth of the Gospel:** The fundamental and essential message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, which includes the radical inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles into one body without adherence to the Mosaic Law as a requirement for salvation.

## 5. FAQs on Gombis, Galatians, Session 3, Galatians 1:11-2:10, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Galatians 1:11-2:10 (Based on Dr. Gombis's Teaching)

### 1. Why does Paul emphasize the divine origin of his gospel in Galatians 1:11-24?

Paul stresses that his gospel is "not from man" but received "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" to establish its authority and independence from human sources, particularly those who might be challenging his message in Galatia. He wants the Galatians to understand that his apostleship and the gospel he preaches come directly from God, not from human tradition or the Jerusalem authorities. This establishes the legitimacy of his teaching and counters any claims that his gospel is a secondary or derived version.

### 2. What does Dr. Gombis mean by "Paul's gospel performance" and how does Paul's life serve as a "revelation of Jesus Christ"?

By "Paul's gospel performance," Dr. Gombis refers to how Paul's own life has been radically transformed by the gospel and now serves as a living demonstration of its power. Paul's dramatic shift from persecuting the church to passionately proclaiming Christ illustrates the transformative nature of the gospel. His life, both before and after his conversion, reveals the dramatic inbreaking of God's grace and the reorientation of his entire being around Christ, thus embodying and revealing Jesus to others.

### 3. How does Paul describe his former life "in Judaism" and why is it important to understand this context?

Paul describes his former life "in Judaism" not as simply practicing the Jewish faith, but as being part of a zealous subgroup intensely committed to the purity of Jewish life and ancestral traditions, seeking to exclude Hellenistic influences and secure God's blessing for Israel through their efforts. Understanding this context is crucial because Paul isn't rejecting his Jewish heritage entirely, but rather the narrow, coercive, and ultimately misguided way he pursued it, which he now recognizes as being in opposition to God's purposes in Christ.

**4. What is the significance of Paul mentioning his lack of immediate consultation with "flesh and blood" and his delayed visit to Jerusalem after his conversion?**

Paul highlights his lack of immediate consultation and his delayed visit to Jerusalem (three years) to underscore the divine origin and independence of his gospel. He didn't seek approval or instruction from human authorities, even the established apostles in Jerusalem. This emphasizes that his commission and message came directly from God's revelation, not from human endorsement or tradition centered in Jerusalem. It also subtly addresses potential criticisms from those in Galatia who might be emphasizing the authority of the Jerusalem church.

**5. According to Dr. Gombis, why does Paul go to Jerusalem in Galatians 2:1-10 and what is the outcome of that visit?**

Paul goes to Jerusalem in response to a revelation, not to seek approval for his gospel, but to ensure the unity of the Jewish and Gentile churches and to prevent his ministry from being in vain. He presents his gospel to the Jerusalem leaders. The outcome is their affirmation of his apostleship to the Gentiles, just as Peter's was to the circumcised (Jews). They recognize the grace given to Paul and extend the right hand of fellowship, signifying their agreement and partnership in the gospel mission.

**6. What is the significance of the disagreement over the circumcision of Titus during Paul's visit to Jerusalem?**

The pressure to circumcise Titus, a Gentile believer, was a crucial test case concerning the nature of the gospel and the inclusion of Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas resisted this pressure from "false brothers" because they understood that requiring circumcision for Gentile salvation would undermine the truth that justification comes through faith in Christ alone, apart from the Mosaic Law. This was not just a matter of practice but a fundamental issue of the gospel's integrity and its reach to all nations.

**7. Why does Dr. Gombis suggest that Paul uses slightly sarcastic language when referring to the Jerusalem "pillars"?**

Dr. Gombis suggests that Paul's somewhat sarcastic references to the Jerusalem "pillars" (Peter, James, and John) are not meant to undermine their authority but rather to subtly critique the Galatians' tendency to be swayed by impressive human credentials and connections. By downplaying the significance of these leaders' reputation in relation to his own divinely-given apostleship, Paul redirects the focus back to the power and truth of the gospel itself, rather than the status of its messengers.

**8. What was the one thing the Jerusalem leaders asked Paul and Barnabas to do, and why is it significant?**

The Jerusalem leaders asked Paul and Barnabas to "remember the poor," which Paul states he was already eager to do. This is significant because it highlights a key priority for the early church that transcended the differences in their specific ministries (to Jews and Gentiles). It underscores that caring for the marginalized and needy was a fundamental aspect of the gospel and a point of unity between the different branches of the early Christian movement, reflecting the holistic nature of God's redemptive work.