

Galatians 1:13-16

13. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, **how I PERSECUTED the CHURCH of GOD** beyond measure **and TRIED to DESTROY IT.**

- **I Corinthians 10:32** "Give no _____, either to the _____ or to the Greeks or to the _____ of _____."
- **I Corinthians 15:9** "For I am the _____ of the apostles, who am not _____ to be called an apostle, because I _____ the _____ of _____."
- **Acts 22:4-5** "I _____ this _____ to the _____, binding and delivering into _____ both _____ and _____, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received _____ to the brethren (fellow Jews), and went to Damascus to _____ in _____ even those who were there to Jerusalem to be _____."
- **I Timothy 1:12-13** "And I thank Christ _____ our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the _____, although I was _____ a blasphemer, a _____, and an insolent man; but I obtained _____ because I did it _____ in _____"
- **Acts 9:1-5** "Then Saul, still breathing _____ and _____ against the _____ of the _____, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the _____, whether _____ or _____, he might bring them _____ to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a _____ shone around him from _____. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a _____ saying to him, '_____, Saul, why are you _____?' And he said, 'Who are You, _____?' And the Lord said, 'I am _____, whom you are _____. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'"

Definition: "I PERSECUTED the CHURCH of GOD and TRIED to DESTROY IT" -

This is why Paul thought he was the "least of all the saints" and the "greatest" (chief) of all the sinners, because of his persecution and mistreatment of the followers of Christ. Before Paul met the risen Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he was so deeply ingrained in the Jewish religion, that he thought he was serving God by persecuting and killing Christians. **In the early days of the church, people referred to the Christians as followers of "the Way" of Christ.**

- **Ephesians 3:8** "To me, who am _____ than the _____ of all the saints, this _____ was _____, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
- **I Timothy 1:15** "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save _____, of whom I am _____."
- **John 16:2-3** "They will _____ you _____ of the _____; yes, the time is coming that whoever _____ you will _____ that he _____ God _____."
- **Acts 7:58-59** "Now they cast him out of the city and _____ him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the _____ of a _____ man named _____. And they stoned (killed) Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'"

- **Acts 8:1-3** "Now _____ was _____ to his _____. At that time a great _____ arose _____ the _____ which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried _____ to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for _____, he made havoc of the _____, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to _____."

Definition: "Whoever KILLS you will THINK that he OFFERS God SERVICE" -

Many misguided people have killed the **true followers of Jesus Christ** over the last 2,000 years in **the name of their god or religion**, some even calling themselves Christians. Some, like Saul of Tarsus, who later became known as the Apostle Paul, eventually became true Believers themselves. Many, however, have persecuted and killed Christians because they hate God, and they are motivated by Satan. Most of us are sheltered here in America, and we do not realize **how many Believers in Christ are killed every day** in other countries, just because of their faith in Jesus!

- **Matthew 10:17-20** "But _____ of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge (whip, beat) you in their _____. And you will be brought before governors and kings for My _____, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up (arrest you), do not _____ about how or what you should _____. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is the _____ of your _____ who _____ in you."

Definition: "SAUL, SAUL, why are you PERSECUTING ME?" - Paul's name was SAUL before he became a believer in Jesus Christ. Jesus is speaking to him here, and notice how Jesus says, **"Why are you persecuting ME?" It wasn't just a group of religious people who followed Christ that Saul was persecuting, but Jesus Himself!** The church is more than just a human organization of people with similar beliefs or interests. The Bible tells us that the church is the Body of Christ, so anyone who threatens, persecutes, or mistreats a member of the church of Jesus Christ is actually hurting Jesus himself.

- **Ephesians 1:22-23** "And has put all things under His feet, and gave _____ to be the _____ over all things to the _____, which is His _____, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."
- **I Corinthians 12:11-12** "But one and the same _____ works all these things, distributing to each one individually as _____ wills. For as the _____ is one and has many members, but all the _____ of that one _____, being many, are one _____, so also is _____."
- **I Corinthians 12:18 & 27** "But now _____ has set the _____, each one of them, in the _____, just as _____ pleased." (Verse 27) "Now you are the _____ of _____, and members individually."

14. And I ADVANCED in JUDAISM beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly **ZEALOUS for the TRADITIONS of my FATHERS.**

- **Acts 22:3** "I am indeed a _____, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, _____ according to the strictness of our fathers' _____, and was _____ toward God as you all are today."
- **Acts 26:4-5** "My manner of _____ from my _____, which was spent from the beginning _____ my own _____ at Jerusalem,

all the _____ know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest _____ of our _____ I lived as a _____."

Definition: "ZEALOUS for the TRADITIONS of my FATHERS" - Zealous means **full of ZEAL**, ardently devoted to a purpose. **Zeal means intense enthusiasm**, as in working for a cause. Saul was intensely devoted to the Jewish religion ("**the TRADITIONS of his FATHERS**") , and had at that time rejected Jesus of Nazareth as being the promised Jewish Messiah, until Jesus knocked him off his horse, blinded him with a flash of light, and spoke to him personally. **Saul was full of ZEAL, but for the WRONG CAUSE!** Jesus straightened him out, and that's what He meant by "It is hard for you to kick against the goads (Acts 9:5). Goads were **pointed sticks** used by farmers to poke the oxen and make them go in the right direction when they were going in the wrong direction. **Jesus did that to Saul of Tarsus, and later changed his name to Paul, and turned him in the right direction in his life.**

- **Philippians 3:4-7** "Though I also might have _____ in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have _____ in the _____, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of _____, of the tribe of Benjamin, a _____ of the _____; concerning the _____, a Pharisee; concerning _____, persecuting the church; concerning the _____ which is in the _____, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted _____ for _____."
- **Matthew 15:1-3** "Then the scribes and _____ who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 'Why do Your disciples transgress the _____ of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But He answered and said, 'Why do you also transgress the _____ of _____ because of your _____?'"

Definition: "'You TRANSGRESS the COMMANDMENT of GOD because of your TRADITIONS" - Some traditions are good, and certain families have traditions that they keep year after year in their families, but that is not what Jesus is talking about here. **He is talking about the kinds of traditions that people cling to INSTEAD of STUDYING the WORD of GOD and seeing what God is really saying.** To "transgress the commandment of God" means **to go against what God said in the Scriptures.** The Jews had their "traditional" idea of what the Messiah should be and do, and **when Jesus didn't FIT their EXPECTATIONS, they rejected Him.** Instead, they should have gone back to God's word and studied more carefully, to see if they had made a mistake. Some denominations and churches today are guilty of the same thing, in that they hold to their traditions instead of following what the Bible really teaches.

- **Mark 7:5-9 & 13** "Then the _____ and the scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the _____ of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their _____ is _____ from _____. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of _____." For laying aside the _____ of _____, you hold the _____ of _____ - the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' And He said to them, 'All too well you _____ the commandment of God, that you may _____ your _____.'" (Verse 13) "Making the _____ of _____ of _____ effect through your _____ which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Definition: "PHARISEES" - Paul says that "concerning the law, he was a Pharisee." **The Pharisees were a very strict sect of the Jewish religion.** Their name means "separated", as they tended to separate themselves from the average Jew and think they were better than the average Jew in their keeping of the law. **This was NOT a group that God set up, such as the priests or Levites, but was a man-made group of men who prided themselves in keeping the commandments perfectly.** However, Jesus had many disputes and run-ins with the Pharisees, because **THEY had ADDED so many MAN-MADE COMMANDMENTS to the original commandments of God,** and had made it impossible for the people to keep the law. Another Jewish group mentioned in the Bible were the Sadducees. The main difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees is that the Pharisees believed in a RESURRECTION and believed in ANGELS, and the Sadducees did not. The Sadducees would be similar to our modern day liberal Protestant churches, which do not believe in the literal miracles of the Bible, and do not believe the Bible is God's inspired word.

- **Acts 5:17** "Then the high _____ rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the _____ of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation."
- **Acts 23:8** "For the Sadducees say that there is no _____ - and no _____ or spirit; but the _____ confess both."

15-16. But when it pleased **God, who SEPARATED ME from my mother's WOMB** and **CALLED me through His GRACE,** to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, **I did NOT immediately CONFER with FLESH and BLOOD,**

- **Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb, I _____ you, and _____ you came forth out of the _____, I sanctified you and I _____ you to be a _____ unto the nations."
- **Romans 9:11 & 23-24** "For the children not yet being _____, nor having done any _____ or _____, that the _____ of God according to election (His choice) might stand, not of _____ but of Him who _____" (Verses 23-24) "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of _____, which He had prepared _____ for glory, even _____ whom He _____, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

Definition: "God, who SEPARATED ME from my mother's WOMB" - This mean God has a plan and a purpose for our lives even before we are born. "Separated" means SET APART for a SPECIAL PURPOSE. That's also what it means when Paul says God **"CALLED me through His GRACE."**

- **II Timothy 1:9** "Who has _____ us and _____ us with a holy _____, not according to _____, but according to His own _____ and _____ which was given to _____ in Christ Jesus _____ time began."

Definition: "I did NOT immediately CONFER with FLESH and BLOOD" - Paul means that he did not get together with the other apostles and hammer out a strategy for how to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (non-Jews). He relied on God Himself to teach him, and **we KNOW that God DID teach him,** because **Paul ended up writing much of the New Testament Scriptures.** God gave Paul special knowledge, **by the Holy Spirit,** that even the other apostles did not know at that time, and had Paul write it down and give it to the churches. These writings of Paul and other apostles and "holy men of God" became our Bible.

- **II Peter 1:20-21** "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of _____ is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the _____ of _____, but _____ men of _____ spoke as they were _____ by the _____."