

## **1:1a *Paul an Apostle***

### **1:1b *Not from Humans or Through Humans***

#### **Paul Speaks with Passion.**

Chrysostom: [The first verse] is full of great passion and strong sentiment; and not the prologue only but, as it were, the whole letter. For always to speak mildly to those who are being taught, even when they need vehemence, is not the part of a teacher but of a corrupter and an enemy. Homily on Galatians 1.1–3.2

#### **Paul, Not One of the Twelve, Defines His Apostolate.**

Jerome: Not in pride, as some suppose, but by necessity, he said that he was not an apostle from men or through man ... so that by this he might confound those who were alleging that Paul was not one of the twelve apostles or ordained by his elders. This might also be taken as aimed obliquely at Peter and the others, because the gospel was committed to him not by the apostles but by the same Jesus Christ who had chosen those apostles. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.1.3

#### **Truth Does Not Come from Human Sources Prone to Lie.**

Augustine: The one sent “from men” is a liar; the one sent “through man” tells the truth, as God too, who is truthful, may send truth through men. The one, therefore, who is sent not from men or through man but “through God” derives his truthfulness from the One who makes truthful even those sent through men. Epistle to the Galatians 2.4

### **1:1c *Through Jesus Christ and God the Father***

#### **Divinely Appointed.**

Pamphilus (Editor: of Caesarea): We are clearly given to understand that Jesus Christ was not a [mere] man but was of divine nature.... Because he knew him to be of a more sublime nature, he therefore said that he was not appointed by a man. Apology for Origen.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Christ-Taught.**

Marius Victorinus: His reason for saying “through Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” is that what God does he does through Christ. And so that people would not say, “How did you

learn from Christ?” since Paul had not previously been a follower of Christ and Christ was dead, he said that God raised Christ from the dead. By this he implies that it is Christ himself, who taught him, who has been raised from the dead—raised, that is, by the power of God the Father. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.1.7

### **Raised from the Dead.**

Chrysostom: To say “who raised him from the dead” is to encapsulate the essence of God’s beneficence toward us, which coincides in no small part with his present purpose. For the majority are much less apt to listen to words that establish the majesty of God than to those which demonstrate his good will to humanity. Homily on Galatians 1.1–3.8

## **1:2a *All the Brethren with Me***

### **All the Brothers with Me.**

Marius Victorinus: Whereas he was accustomed to call himself simply Paul the apostle to the Romans and Corinthians, <sup>9</sup> in order to startle the Galatians and reprove them for a grave error he has joined with himself all the brothers who were with him, saying that they themselves were writing to the Galatians, making them feel the shame of thinking contrary to everyone, so as to give more weight to his own injunctions and the gospel that he preaches. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.1.10

### **Paul Speaks with the Consent of Others.**

Chrysostom: Why does he nowhere else add this in his letters? For he puts his own name alone, or names two or three; <sup>11</sup> but here he speaks of the whole community and therefore mentions no one’s name. Why then does he do this? Because their slander against him was that he was the only person proclaiming this and was introducing novelty to doctrine. So as to destroy their calumny, therefore, and to show that his opinions are shared by many, he adds on “the brothers,” showing that what he writes he writes with their consent. Homily on Galatians 1.1–3.12

## **1:2b *To the Churches of Galatia***

### **Addressed to the Whole Church of Galatia.**

Chrysostom: This fire had overtaken not one city, or two or three, but the whole Galatian people. And let me point out here his extreme irritation. He does not write “to the beloved” or “to the sanctified” but “to

the churches of Galatia.” This is the act of one who is intensely displeased and showing his pain, that he addresses them not with love nor with the names of honor but only by that of the congregation. He does not even say “to the churches of God” but “to the churches of Galatia.” <sup>13</sup> Homily on Galatians 1.1–3.<sup>14</sup>

### ***1:3 Grace and Peace from God the Father and Our Lord Jesus Christ***

#### **Distinguishing Grace and Peace.**

Augustine: The grace of God, by which our sins are forgiven, is the condition of our being reconciled to him, whereas peace is that wherein we are reconciled. Epistle to the Galatians 3 [1b.1.3–5].<sup>16</sup>

#### **Why We Call God “Father.”**

Chrysostom: He calls God “Father” here not to flatter them but vehemently reproofing them and reminding them how it was that they became sons. For it was not through the law but through the bath of regeneration that they were deemed worthy of this honor.... “You slaves and enemies and aliens,” [he says], “why are you so quick to call God your Father? Surely it was not the law that gave you this kinship? So why do you desert the one who was leading you to this sense of affiliation and return to your previous mentor?” Homily on Galatians 1.1–3.<sup>17</sup>

### ***1:4a Christ Gave Himself for Our Sins***

### ***1:4b Delivering Us from This Evil Age***

### ***1:4c The Will of Our God and Father***

#### **Is Christ Therefore Subordinate to God.**

Jerome: Neither did the Son give himself without the Father’s will, nor did the Father give up the Son without the Son’s will.... The Son gave himself, that he himself, as righteousness, might do away with the unrighteousness in us. Wisdom gave itself that it might oust foolishness. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.3.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Christ Made His Father Our Father.**

Chrysostom: Since they thought that they were disobeying God, as the giver of the law, and were afraid to forsake the old and pass to the new, he corrects this reasoning of theirs, saying that this also pleased

the Father. And he said not simply “of the Father” but “of your Father.” He adds this immediately, exhorting them by showing that Christ made his Father our Father. Homily on Galatians 1.4.24

### **1:5a Glory for Ever and Ever**

#### **Christ Did Not Seek His Own Glory.**

Augustine: How much more, therefore, ought men not to claim the credit for themselves if they perform any good work, when the very Son of God in the Gospel said that he sought not his own glory. Nor had he come to do his own will but the will of him who sent him! This will and glory of the Father the apostle now commemorates, that he also, by the example of the Lord who sent him, may indicate that he seeks not his own glory or the performance of his own will in the preaching of the gospel, just as he says a little later, “if I were to please men, I should not be a servant of Christ.”<sup>25</sup> Epistle to the Galatians 3 [1b.1.3–5].<sup>26</sup>

### **1:5b Amen**

#### **Why Say “Amen” So Early?**

Chrysostom: We nowhere find the word amen placed at the beginning or in the prologue of his letters but after many words. But here, showing that what he has said is a sufficient accusation of the Galatians and that the argument is closed, he made this the prologue. For it does not take long to establish charges that are patently true.... But not only for this reason does he do it but because he is exceedingly astonished by the magnitude of the gift, the excess of grace and what God did at once in a tiny space of time for those in such a state. Unable to express this in words, Paul breaks into a doxology. He holds up for the whole world a blessing, not indeed worthy of the subject but such as was possible to him. Homily on Galatians 1.5.27

## **1:6a *Their Quick Desertion***

### **Who Has Prompted the Desertion?**

Jerome: The word for “being carried away” 1 is first found in Genesis where God carries Enoch away and he is not found. 2 ... The one whom God carries away is not found by his enemies ... but he whom the devil carries away is carried into that which appears to be but is not. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.6.3

### **The Abruptness of Their Lapse.**

Chrysostom: The one who is carried away after a long time is worthy of blame, but the one who falls at the first attack and in the initial skirmish has furnished an example of the greatest weakness. And with this he charges them also, saying “What is this, that those who deceive you do not even need time, but the first assault suffices to rout and capture you?” ... At the same time he shows in what great and high estimation he holds them. For if he had thought them mere nobodies and easily deceived, he would not have been surprised by what occurred. Homily on Galatians 1.6.4

## **1:6b *Called in the Grace of Christ***

### **The Deceitfulness of the Lapse.**

Chrysostom: And he did not say “from the gospel” but “from God,” for he used terms that were more horrifying and more likely to astound them. For those who wished to deceive them did not do so all at once but gently estranged them from the faith in fact, leaving the names unchanged. For such are the wiles of the devil, not to make apparent the instruments of his hunt. For if they had said, “Depart from Christ,” the Galatians would have shunned them as deceivers and corrupters. As it was, the deceivers allowed them still to remain in the faith while they were undermining the whole edifice with impunity. The language these tunnelers used was covered with these familiar names as with awnings. Homily on Galatians 1.6.5

## ***1:6c–7a Turning to a Different Gospel***

### **Why Is It Not a Gospel?**

Augustine: If it were another gospel other than the one that the Lord has given through himself or through some other, it would not be a gospel. Epistle to the Galatians 4 [1b.1.6–9].<sup>7</sup>

### **There Is No Other Gospel.**

Jerome: Not another gospel, because all that is false is insubstantial, and that which is contrary to truth finally has no existence. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.6.<sup>8</sup>

## ***1:7b Perverting the Gospel of Christ***

### **They Can Do No More Than “Want to” Pervert the Gospel.**

Jerome: They wish, he says, to disturb the gospel of Christ but cannot prevail, because it is of such a nature that it cannot be other than the truth. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.6.<sup>9</sup>

## ***1:8a An Angel and a Contrary Gospel***

### **Could Angels Ever Deceive?**

Jerome: This could be understood as a hyperbolic statement, not meaning that an apostle or an angel could preach otherwise than they had spoken.... [Yet] angels are also mutable if they have not held fast to their ground.... Lucifer, who rose in the morning, also fell. He who dispensed deceit to all nations is to be trampled on the earth. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.8.<sup>11</sup>

## ***1:8b Let False Teachers Be Accursed***

## ***1:9a The Apostle’s Reiteration***

### **Why He Repeats.**

Chrysostom: Lest you should think that the words came from passion or were spoken hyperbolically or through a loss of self-control, he says the same things over again. Homily on Galatians 1.9.<sup>14</sup>

## **1:9b *An Anathema***

### **Has Paul Cursed Without Warning?**

Jerome: He indicates that he initially, fearing this very thing, denounced an anathema on those who would preach in this way. Now, after it has been preached, he decrees the anathema that he formerly predicted.

Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.8.15

## **1:10a *Seeking Divine or Human Favor?***

### **On Not Despising Human Opinions.**

Jerome: Let us not suppose that the apostle is teaching us by his example to despise the judgments of others ... but if it can happen that we can please God and others equally, let us also please others.... The word now is inserted specially here, to show that people are to be pleased or displeased according to the circumstances, so that he who is now displeasing for the sake of gospel truth was at one time pleasing for the sake of people's salvation. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.10.1

### **How We Are Best Pleased Through the Truth.**

Augustine: No one persuades God, for all things are manifest to him. But a person does well in wishing to persuade others when it is not himself that he wishes them to like but the truth that he persuades them of.... When one pleases others on account of truth, it is not the proclaimer himself but the truth that pleases.... Thus the sense is, "Do I then persuade men or God? And since it is men that I persuade, do I seek to please them? If I still sought to please men, I should not be Christ's servant. For he bids his servants to learn from him to be meek and lowly of heart, which is utterly impossible for one who seeks to please men on his own account, for his own private and special glory." ... Both then can be rightly said: "I please" and "I do not please." Epistle to the Galatians 5 [1b.1.10].2

## **1:10b *A Servant of Christ***

### **Personal Evidence.**

Chrysostom: He has said this because he is about to rehearse his previous life and his sudden conversion and to show through manifest proofs that there was truth in his conversion, lest [his opponents] should

imagine that he was saying this to defend himself against them and be elated.... For he knew the proper season for the correction of his pupils and how to say something sublime and grand. Now, there was a time to demonstrate the truth of his preaching in another way: from signs, from wonders, from dangers, from imprisonments, from daily deaths, from hunger and thirst and nakedness, and from other things of the kind. But since his argument now was not with pseudo apostles but with apostles, and since they had been partakers of these dangers, he employs a different method of argument. Homily on Galatians 1.10.<sup>3</sup>

### **1:11 *The Gospel Paul Preached***<sup>4</sup>

#### **Why Does He Say “Not According to Man”?**

Marius Victorinus: Possibly because the Savior himself is not a man [merely], as some think. Nor because he is sent in the form of a man is he therefore a man but God in a mystery taking flesh to overcome the flesh.... If “from a man” means one thing, “after the manner of man” will mean another. And again if “I did not receive from a man” is one thing, “not after the manner of man” will be another. Therefore “after the manner of man” can be understood to mean “so that you may understand in a corporeal manner,” seeing that the argument received is that “which I did not receive from man.” Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.11.<sup>5</sup>

#### **The Man from God.**

Augustine: The gospel that is “according to men” is a lie, for every person is a liar, <sup>6</sup> seeing that whatever truth is found in a man is not from the man but through the man from God. Epistle to the Galatians <sup>6</sup> [1b.1.11–12]<sup>7</sup>

### **1:12a *A Gospel from God***

#### **The Gospel Received from God.**

Pamphilus: Therefore he shows plainly that Jesus was not a [mere] man; and if he is not a man then without doubt he is God. Apology for Origen.<sup>8</sup>

#### **No Human Teacher.**

Chrysostom: Those who are taught by men, when they have been vehement and hot in the opposite cause, require time and much ingenuity for their conversion. But he who was so suddenly converted and



was rendered clean and sober at the very peak of his madness had obviously received a divine vision and teaching. Homily on Galatians 1.12.<sup>9</sup>

### **1:12b *A Revelation of Jesus Christ***

### **1:13 *One Who Persecuted the Church***

#### **Why He Reminds Them of His Own Story.**

Marius Victorinus: The point of telling this about himself is to show that he did not learn from a man or through man but from God and Jesus Christ. The aim of this is to prevent the Galatians from entertaining another opinion or supposing that anything needs to be added to the gospel. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.13–14.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Whether the Law Itself Is to Blame for Legalistic Servitude.**

Augustine: If therefore he showed prowess in Judaism by persecuting and wasting God's church, it is obvious that Judaism is contrary to the church of God, not through that spiritual law which the Jews had received but through their carnal habit of servitude. And if Paul as a zealot—that is, an imitator of late Judaic traditions—persecuted the church of God, his paternal traditions are contrary to God's church, but the blame does not belong to the law itself. For the law is spiritual and does not allow itself to be interpreted carnally. <sup>14</sup> That is the fault of those who understand carnally the things that they have received and who also have handed down many things of their own, undermining, as the Lord said, the command of God through their traditions. Epistle to the Galatians 7 [1b.1.13–14].<sup>15</sup>

### **1:14 *Advanced in Judaism***

#### **Zeal for God.**

Chrysostom: What he is saying is, "If what I then did against the church was done not on man's account but through zeal for God—mistaken but zeal nonetheless—how can I now be acting for vainglory when I operate on behalf of the church and know the truth?" Homily on Galatians 1.14.<sup>16</sup>

### **Submission to Jewish Tradition.**

Jerome: He prudently inserts the statement that he served not so much God's law as the paternal traditions — that is, those of the Pharisees, who teach doctrines and precepts of men<sup>17</sup> and reject the law of God to set up their own traditions. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.13.<sup>18</sup>

### **1:15a *Set Apart Before Birth***

### **1:15b *Called Through Grace***

#### **Called Through Grace from the Womb.**

Marius Victorinus: The God who caused me to be born, who separated me from my mother's womb, also called me through his grace. For no one knows God except one who has been called. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.15–16.<sup>21</sup>

### **1:16a *The Son Revealed to Paul***<sup>22</sup>

#### **Why Revealed "in" Him?**

Jerome: If something is revealed to someone, that may be revealed to him which was not in him before; but if it is revealed in him, that is revealed which was previously in him and had been subsequently revealed ... from which it clearly appears that there is natural knowledge of God in all. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.15.<sup>23</sup>

#### **What Was Revealed.**

Philastrius: This means that he showed him the meaning of the Law and the Prophets. Book of Heresies 155.5.<sup>24</sup>

### **1:16b *Preaching Christ Among the Gentiles***

## **1:16c *Not Conferring with Flesh and Blood***

### **To Whom Is He Referring?**

Chrysostom: "I did not confer with flesh and blood." Here he is hinting at the apostles, describing them by their human nature. Yet if he means to refer here to all people we shall not contradict him. Homily on Galatians 1.15–16.<sup>26</sup>

### **Could There Be Another Meaning?**

Jerome: I know that many think that this was said of the apostles ... but far be it from me to reckon Peter, John and James as "flesh and blood," which cannot possess the kingdom of God. <sup>27</sup> ... It is obvious that Paul did not confer with flesh and blood after the revelation of Christ because he would not throw pearls before swine or that which is holy to the dogs. <sup>28</sup> Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.16.<sup>29</sup>

## **1:17a *Paul and the Apostles in Jerusalem***

### **Paul's Motive Not Arrogance.**

Chrysostom: If one interprets these words by themselves, they seem suggestive of some great conceit or a sentiment not worthy of an apostle. To rely on one's own choice and have no one else to share one's estimate seems a mark of folly.... But we should not interpret bare words, or many absurdities follow.... Let us now interpret the mind of Paul when he wrote these words. Let us consider his aim and his whole attitude to the apostles, and then we shall know his intention in saying this.... For since those who plunder the church were saying that one should follow the apostles, who did not forbid these things, he is forced to withstand them stoutly, not wishing to disparage the apostles but to restrain the folly of those who were falsely puffed up. Homily on Galatians 1.17.<sup>30</sup>

## **1:17b *Into Arabia and Damascus***

### **His Modesty.**

Chrysostom: And let me point out to you his humility. For, having said "I went up to Arabia," he has added "and I returned to Damascus." He does not recount his conversions or what people and how many he instructed, even though he showed such zeal after his baptism that the Jews were enraged against him,

and their animosity became so intense that they laid an ambush for him and wanted to kill him, along with the Greeks. <sup>32</sup> ... But he says nothing of these things here, nor would he have spoken of them in that place had he not seen that the occasion demanded that he recount his own history. Homily on Galatians 1.17.<sup>33</sup>

### **Could There Be a Deeper Meaning?**

Jerome: How are we to explain this narrative, if we read later that Paul went immediately to Arabia after the revelation of Christ? <sup>34</sup> ... He teaches that the Old Testament, that is, the son of the bondwoman, was established in Arabia. And so, as soon as Paul believed, he turned to the Law, the Prophets and the symbols of the Old Testament that were then lying in obscurity and sought in them the Christ whom he was commanded to preach to the Gentiles. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.17.<sup>35</sup>

## **1:18a *Visiting Peter in Jerusalem***

### **Whether His Knowledge Came from Peter, to Whom Christ Committed So Much Authority.**

Marius Victorinus: For if the foundation of the church was laid in Peter, to whom all was revealed, as the gospel says, Paul knew that he ought to see Peter. When he speaks of seeing Peter, it is as one to whom Christ had committed so much authority, not as one from whom he was to learn anything.... “How,” [he implies], “could I learn this great knowledge of God from Peter in such a short time?” Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.18.1

### **Why Visit Peter?**

Chrysostom: What greater humility of soul could there be? For after so many conversions, having no need of Peter or of speech with him but being equal with him in honor—for I say no more at present—he nonetheless goes up to him as to one who is greater and senior ... and he says not “to see Peter” but to visit Peter, as people say when acquainting themselves with great and splendid cities. Homily on Galatians 1.18.2

### **Fraternal Love Magnified.**

Augustine: If, when Paul had evangelized Arabia, he subsequently saw Peter, it was not so that he might learn the gospel from Peter himself (for then he would have seen him before) but so that he might enhance familial love by being with the apostles. Epistle to the Galatians 8 [1b.1.15–19].<sup>3</sup>

## **1:18b Remaining for Fifteen Days**

### **Why So Long?**

Chrysostom: Now to remain with him was an act of honor, but to remain with him so many days was one of friendship and extreme love. Homily on Galatians 1.18.4

### **Why Not Longer?**

Jerome: He who had prepared himself for so long a time did not need any long instruction. And, though it seems excessive to some to investigate numbers in Scripture, yet I think it not beside the point to say that the fifteen days that Paul spent with Peter signifies [in late Judaic piety] the fullness of wisdom and the perfection of doctrine, seeing that there are fifteen psalms in a psalter and fifteen steps by which people go up to sing to God. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.18.5

## **1:19 Seeing James the Lord's Brother**

### **Some Not Among the Twelve Were Called Apostles.**

Jerome: That some were called apostles apart from the twelve is a consequence of the fact that all who had seen the Lord and subsequently preached him were called apostles. 6 Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.19.7

### **The Solemn Title.**

Chrysostom: "And I saw no other but James the brother of the Lord." See how much greater is his friendship for Peter, for he stayed on his account.... [He says of James] "I saw," not "I was taught." But see with what honor he named this man also. For he says not simply James but adds the solemn title. So free of jealousy was he. For had he wished only to indicate whom he meant he could have identified him by another name and called him the son of Clopas, as the Evangelist does. 8 Homily on Galatians 1.19.9

## **1:20 I Do Not Lie!**

### **Whether a Sacred Oath Defies the Commandment to Not Swear.**

Augustine: He certainly swears, and what oath could be more sacred? But an oath is not against the commandment when the "evil cause" <sup>14</sup> is not in the swearer but in the incredulity of him to whom he is forced to swear. For we understand from this that what the Lord meant in prohibiting oaths was that

everyone, so far as in him it lies, should not swear the oaths that many do, having the oath on their lips as though it were something lofty and elegant. Epistle to the Galatians 9 [1b.1.20–24].<sup>15</sup>

### **The Deeper Sense.**

Jerome: Or perhaps this could be taken in a deeper sense, that “what I say to you is before God, that is, worthy of God’s countenance. And why worthy of God’s countenance? 16 Because I do not lie.” Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.20.<sup>17</sup>

## **1:21 *Into Syria and Cilicia***

### **What This Proves.**

Marius Victorinus: What does he prove by all this? That his gospel had persuaded everyone, even in his absence. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.21–22.<sup>18</sup>

## **1:22 *Not Known by Sight to the Judean Churches***

### **What Slander Is Paul Rebutting?**

Chrysostom: What is his aim in saying “I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea?” That you may understand he was so far from preaching circumcision to them that they did not even know him by sight. Homily on Galatians 1.22–23.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Bearing of His Short Time in Judea on His Apostleship.**

Jerome: He discreetly returns to the main point, establishing that he had spent so short a time in Judea that he was unknown even by face to the believers. Hence he shows that he had no teachers—not Peter, not James, not John—but Christ, who had revealed his gospel to him. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.20

### **The Vitality of Jewish Churches Apart from Jerusalem.**

Augustine: It should be observed that Jews had believed in Christ not only in Jerusalem, nor were they so few that they had been absorbed into the Gentile churches, but they were so numerous that churches came into being from them. Epistle to the Galatians 9 [1b.1.20–24].<sup>21</sup>

## **1:23 *The Persecutor Preaches the True Faith***

### **Hyperbole and Modesty.**

Chrysostom: What soul could be more modest than this? For when he is discussing the things that bring opprobrium on him, such as his persecution and plundering of the church, he narrates it with great hyperbole, putting his previous life on show; but the things which would enhance his reputation he passes by. Homily on Galatians 1.23.22

## **1:24 *Glorifying God Because of Paul***

### **Receiving One Previously Assailed.**

Marius Victorinus: By “glorified God in me” he means they called him great. For what is so magnificent as to have your own opinion turned around and receive the one whom you previously assailed? This being so, you also should follow nothing else than the gospel preached to you by the one who is a miracle among the Gentiles, because he preaches the faith of Christ. Epistle to the Galatians 1.1.24.23

### **Does Paul Claim Anything for Himself?**

Chrysostom: See here too how exactly he follows the principle of humility. For he says not “they were amazed at me,” “they praised me” or “they were astonished,” but he has shown that all was of grace by saying “they glorified God in me.” Homily on Galatians 1.24.24