

God himself, to seek the advice about the divinely taught things from humans. Furthermore he himself from the beginning had the correct opinion, that the other Apostles validated later on also, related to the non necessity of circumcising the Christians, in other words, the basic deception of the “other gospel” of the Judaizers.

After these things “how could God not pay attention to Paul?” a contemporary apologist of Christianity also asks. Probably for this reason also, the former persecutor Saul wrote later on to the Corinthians that “they who love God”, not only will come to know Him, but He himself “has already come to know them” and recognized them as His own ((1 Cor. 8:3).

Archim. B. L

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LUKE**, Acepshimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, & Aeithalas the Deacon, Martyrs of Persia, Dedication of the Temple of the Holy Great Martyr George in Lydda, Holy Father and New Hieromartyr Gregory of Neapolis. Theodore the Confessor, Bishop of Ancyra, George of Neapolis the New Martyr, Winifred of Treffynnon.

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Third Tone*

**EOETHINON :** *Nineth Orthros Gospel*

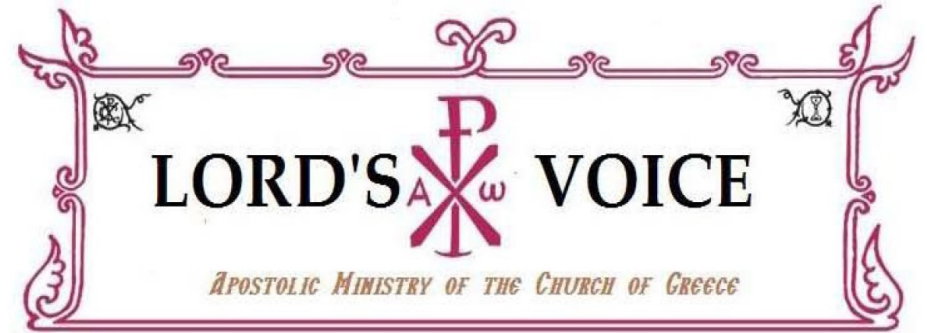
**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to GALATIANS 1:11-19*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Luke 16:19-31*

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2019 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LUKE** *Erastus, Olympas, Rodion, Sosipater, Quartus, and Tertios, Apostles of the 70, Orestes the Martyr of Cappadocia, Holy Father Arsenius of Cappadocia, Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Assa*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to GALATIANS 2:16-20*

**GOSPEL READING:** *LUKE 10:25-37*



67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR NOVEMBER 3 2019 PAMPHLET #44 (3466)

## THE BIG CONVERSION

A Russian philosophizing theologian, writing about the relationship of Orthodoxy with heresies, uses the not so apt parable: “A great craftsmen departed leaving his skill to his three disciples. The older one faithfully followed whatever the teacher taught him, without changing anything. Of the other two, the one made additions, whereas the other subtractions. Upon his return, the teacher, without getting angry at anyone, told the younger ones: thank your older brother. Without him the truth of the art would not been saved, which I handed down to you. Then he told the older one: Thank your younger brothers. Without them and you wouldn't not have understood the value of the art that I entrusted you with.”

**“Last of all he appeared to me also”**

Of course, the Church never expressed gratitude to the heretics. She expresses only bitterness, pain and prayers for their return. The Apostle Paul also expresses bitterness and pain, especially in his Epistle to the Galatians, for the deceived Judaizing false brethren. And not only does he not consider them useful for showing forth the value of the truth, but he also anathematizes them, cutting them off from the Body of Christ, his Church. The sacred Chrysostom absolutely justifies him, saying that “he who perverts even to the slightest, the healthy faith,

## ***EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO GALATIANS 1:11-19***

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. 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 advanced 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 had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother

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destroys everything and falls into a worse condition than that in which he was in, before he believed".

The healthy faith – Paul clarifies in today's reading – is not some human invention. And he, and all the other apostles, neither received it nor were taught it by a human. Christ himself revealed it to them. They, of course, had been prepared by the Precious Forerunner and had become quite clear mirrors, receptive and imparting of the Light of Christ. He though, the "excessive persecutor" of the Church, who wanted, according to Saint Theophylactus "to dig it up and wipe it out", how was he converted in one moment into the brightest "vessel of choice"? Is there a more deafening witness that Christ himself revealed it to him than his abrupt conversion? "If he who revealed himself to him was not Christ, Paul would not have changed right away," says the Golden-tongued one. "They who are taught by humans, when they are

fanatic in the contrary things, need time and effort to be convinced. He though, who believed, without a delay in time in Christ, whereas he was at the height of his anti-Christly rage, it is very obvious that he was granted a divine vision and teaching".

### **Worthy of the calling**

Paul, trying to explain the "scandalous" favor of God, says that He preselected and separated him "from his mother's womb". However that God separated him before he was born for such a high work, is not related to some favoritism of God. According to an ecclesiastical interpreter, "God separated him according to His foreknowledge that he is worthy". He simply foresaw, in other words, that he would become worthy for such a calling and would respond with all his powers to it. So for this reason also, He called him in such an amazing manner. So God does not "predestine". He simply "foreknows" and rewards each one's eagerness and zeal. And Paul had fiery zeal and great sacrificial disposition. He was using both however in a deceived direction. But when Christ showed him the truth, he disposed them multiplied, in the service of His Gospel, resulting in him becoming the Apostle "in most toils and prisons... and in wounds exceeding".

Paul himself, of course, considers all these things the fruit of the grace of God and not of his own value. With the mouth, furthermore, of the interpreter Saint John, he says: "For this reason I received mercy, so that no one might despair, since I, the worst of everyone, enjoyed such philanthropy from God." "Did you see the excess of humble mindedness?" the saint asks surprised. And he adds that such a humble train of mind the saint projected "wherein the Gospel was not being harmed". When however the false apostles were disputing his apostolic office, he was forced justifiably to boast about his divine visions and his toils for the sake of Christ.

### **A worker of humble-mindedness**

In no case nevertheless, does his admission become a criticizable boastfulness that, in order to preach the Gospel, he did not seek the advice of any man, nor did he go to Jerusalem to the apostles before him. This would be improper, he who was taught by