

"Paul's Defense of His Apostleship"

Galatians 1-2

Part 1

Introduction: Last week we looked at the introduction to the book of Galatians. I want to do a quick review of that introduction so that we can better understand what we are going to look at tonight. The book of Galatians was written to several churches in the region of Galatia. The churches had been planted by Paul on his first missionary journey. Shortly after Paul departed from the area Satan infiltrated the churches with false teaching. The recipients of the letter were new believers whom Paul led to the Lord and they were hungry to learn more. This is what Satan took advantage of. He led the false teachers/Pharisees in to fill their minds with false doctrine. The false teachers had come in and they were teaching that sanctification, which is the present tense of our salvation, could only be attained by keeping the Law. They taught these new believers that if they were not under the Law then they would nothing to keep the sin nature reigned in and they would then go off into a life of licentiousness.

Paul therefore wrote this letter to refute the teaching of the Pharisees. Paul will explain to these believers that sanctification comes when a believer continues on the same path which they started on. In other words, we are saved by grace through faith and we are to continue to live by faith. Just as grace through faith caused us to be born again by the supernatural power of God, in the same way when we walk by faith in the promises of God the Holy Spirit then gives to us the supernatural power over sin in our lives and leads us to a life of holiness. Any in churches today do not understand the means of sanctification and holiness. They are convinced that holiness is attained by keeping the Law or by following a set of manmade rules. To them it is dressing a certain way, it is not going to certain places, or it is not doing any work on Sunday. These beliefs are not the way of holiness. Holiness in the believer's life is only by grace through faith in the promises of God, just the same way salvation comes to a believer. That is why we shall see in this letter many references to justification because Paul is making the point that sanctification comes in the same way that justification came into the believer's life, by faith.

Now we need to also understand that when the Pharisees could not argue against the theology of Paul, they then turned to attack his person. They came against his Apostleship declaring that he was not a true Apostle because he had not walked with the Lord when He lived on the earth. Therefore, in the first two chapters Paul will focus upon defending his Apostleship. Here is the very same outline we looked at last week.

- ✓ **Chapters 1-2 - Paul defends his Apostleship.**

- ✓ Chapters 3-4 – Doctrine. A believer is sanctified the same way in which he was justified.
- ✓ Chapters 5-6 – Practical. You will reach a high level of holiness as you walk by faith not by living a life under the Law or any manmade rules.

Let us now get to the letter.

➤ Paul's Introduction

Galatians 1:1-2

As Paul opens up this letter he is going to get right to the heart of the matter. In the first five verses Paul will touch upon two very important points.

1. The Source of his Apostleship.

Notice Galatians 1:1

Paul begins to talk about his Apostleship right away. He is explaining in this verse that he was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees denied his Apostleship because Paul was not one of the original Apostles. There was one specific requirement to be an Apostle. It is seen in Acts 1 when Peter is speaking on the need to fill the vacant position of Judas.

Acts 1:21-22

²¹ *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,*

²² *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

An Apostle had to be a man who was an eyewitness of Jesus after His resurrection. Paul was an eyewitness of Jesus after His resurrection but not in the same way that the other Apostles were.

Acts 9:1-5

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

² *And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

³ *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

⁴ *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

⁵ *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Here on the Damascus Road Paul met the resurrected Savior and it was here that he was commissioned to be an Apostle. Notice what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15:7-10a

⁷ *After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.*

⁸ *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

⁹ *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

¹⁰ *But by the grace of God I am what I am:*

Notice Galatians 1:1 again.

Paul makes it very clear that he was not an Apostle OF men which means he was not an Apostle who was controlled by man. He makes it clear that he was not an Apostle BY man which means it was not declared to be an Apostle by any religious leader. In contrast he states that he was an Apostle by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Why does Paul add this to the end? There are two reasons.

1. Because if God the Father could raise Jesus Christ from the dead then He could certainly take a sinner such as Paul and make him an Apostle.
2. Jesus is the Head of the church and in His present ministry He appointed Paul to be an Apostle.

Ephesians 1:20-22

²⁰ *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*

²¹ *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

²² And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Jesus Christ sits in the position of the highest Authority. Therefore since He appointed Paul to be an Apostle how could anyone deny it?

Notice Galatians 1:2

Here is a very important verse. Paul references all the brethren that are with him. We do not know who all was with him. But the point he is making here is that those who are with him acknowledged his Apostleship. The Pharisees might have been denying it but the True believers and the pillars in the church were not. They had accepted his Apostleship. The endorsement of the other Apostles gave great support to Paul position as an Apostle. If he were not really an Apostle then why would the church accept him? Paul had two things to fully support his Apostleship.

1. He had been appointed by the resurrected Savior.
2. He was accepted by the church and the other Apostles.

It was not like he claimed to be an Apostle and then came up with some "off the wall" doctrine. The doctrine he taught had been accepted by the other Apostles. They were all on the same page with what Paul was teaching so to deny his Apostleship was to question the credibility of the other Apostles. There was therefore a consistency among the Apostles.

Galatians 2:9

⁹ And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

➤ The Purpose of the Gospel

Galatians 1:3-5

When most believers think of the Gospel they think of its power in the past when they were justified and they think of the future when they will one day be in heaven. There are few believers who understand that the Gospel's power is working right now and this is the focus of this letter. The Gospel has saved us and promises that one day we will go to heaven but the power of the Gospel is available right now to deliver us from the power of sin.

Notice Galatians 1:3

There are two words here that we need to pay close attention to. They are GRACE and PEACE.

- **GRACE** - This is unmerited favor. In other words, it is receiving what we do not deserve. We are saved by GRACE through faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Now what we need to understand is that grace does not stop at justification. It is grace that enables us to have victory over sin.

Titus 2:11-12

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

It is grace that teaches us and empowers us by the Spirit to overcome sin. This grace is inexhaustible.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When we walk by faith in the promises of God then His grace through the Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome sin.

- **Peace** - This is what the world is searching for and it can only be found in Jesus Christ. This PEACE is seen in two ways in the believer's life.
 1. **Peace with God** - This is positional peace that happens the moment we are saved.

Romans 5:1, 8-10

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

➤ **Peace of God** - This is experiential peace that comes as we walk/live by faith.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Notice Galatians 1:4

The world we live in is evil because it is under the control of the evil one. Satan is the god of this world. But Jesus went to the cross to die for our sin debt and also to deliver us from sin in this life.

1 John 3:5

⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Jesus died to save us from the penalty of sin. He did not then let us to our own power to overcome sin in our lives. He has given us what we need to live holy lives.

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Conclusion:

Notice Galatians 1:5

When we live in the power of the Spirit as we walk by faith, it is then that God is glorified. This is God's purpose for all of history. We are here to glorify Him with our lives. When this age is over, we will glorify Him for all eternity.

Ephesians 2:6-7

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.