

**"Paul's Defense of His Apostleship"**

**Galatians 1-2**

**Part 3**

**Introduction:** Tonight, in our study of Galatians we will now get to Paul's straight forward defense of his Apostleship. Let us keep in mind that the Pharisees who had infiltrated the churches of Galatia not only distorted the Gospel that Paul preached but they also attacked the authority of Paul. They claimed he was not a true Apostle because he never walked with Jesus Christ on the earth. He was not of the original Apostles. They were correct in that he was not like the other Apostles but he was still an Apostle. He was just called to be an Apostle at a later date. Paul himself knew that his calling was different.

**1 Corinthians 15:8-9**

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

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

It was based upon this that his critics attacked him and declared that Paul's message could not be trusted because he was not a true Apostle. In the section before us he will therefore defend his Apostleship which will in turn confirm his message.

➤ **Paul's Conversion**  
**Galatians 1:11-24**

✓ **Paul's Message**

**Notice Galatians 1:11-12**

Here we see the source for Paul's Gospel. He had not received it from man or from any school where it was taught. The Gospel that Paul preached was from a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. This happened in Acts 9 on the Damascus Road. I need to make something clear here before we move on. While Paul received direct revelation from the Lord for his ministry, today there is no direct revelation from the Lord. God has revealed all that we need and it is recorded in the Bible. There are people today who claim to get direct revelation from God but that cannot be true for if there was new revelation today that would be adding to the Words of the Bible.

**Revelation 22:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things**, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

<sup>19</sup> And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

The Bible is complete and there is no new revelation today. God speaks through His Word and through the Holy Spirit today. So, when someone claims to have a vision or they claim to have been taken to heaven and they say they have a new message from the Lord we can be sure it is not of God. Paul was given the Gospel through direct revelation because in his day the New Testament Bible was not yet written. So, getting back to the point, Paul was declaring the Source of his message and it was from Jesus Christ Himself.

✓ **Paul's Past**

Paul will now explain in verses 13-14 what his life was like before his encounter with Jesus Christ. He will look to his past in these verses to show how the message of the Gospel changed him.

**Notice Galatians 1:13**

The Word "conversation" here refers to Paul's lifestyle. In Paul's earlier life he persecuted the church and he did it beyond measure.

**Acts 8:1-3**

*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

<sup>2</sup> And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

<sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

**Acts 9:1-2**

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

<sup>2</sup> *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.*

**Acts 22:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.*

<sup>4</sup> *And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.*

Paul certainly persecuted the church above measure. It is also interesting to note that Paul refers to Judaism as "the Jew's religion." It was certainly not his religion nor was it God's religion but it was the religion which the Jews established and we shall consider it in a moment.

**Notice Galatians 1:14**

Paul exceeded all the other Pharisees. I want to point out that he says that he was zealous of the traditions of his fathers. What does this mean? Paul is looking back to what the Jews had done with the Law. Keep in mind that in the Old Testament the nation of Israel was guilty of breaking the 10 Commandments over and over again. Because they had violated the Mosaic Law and walked in disobedience, God would first send the 10 northern tribes into captivity. This happened in 722 BC. Then in 598 BC the 2 southern tribes went into the Babylonian Captivity for 70 years. These 2 captivities brought fear in the Jews years later and therefore they decided to set up a fence to prevent another captivity from happening. The idea was good but it was not what God desired. They made up their own rules and laws to keep themselves from violating the Mosaic Law again. They came up with over 600 commands that the Jews were to follow. It was an attempt to keep the Jews far from the violation of the Law of Moses. But in this practice their laws became a religion of the Jews. This was the traditions of the fathers that Paul was zealous for. These laws and commandments of the Pharisees became a heavy burden upon the Jews because no one could keep them. We see this in the offer of Jesus.

**Matthew 11:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Paul went to the extreme of murder to cancel the church because he believed it violated the Law.

Why does Paul point to his past? Because he wants his readers to see the change in his life. Something supernatural had to happen to turn this man around. It was the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.

**Application:**

Paul's life is a wonderful picture of grace. He was a murderer and if he could be saved anyone could be saved. Moses, David, Jacob, all had sinful pasts and they were all saved.

✓ **God's calling.**

**Notice Galatians 1:15-16a.**

As we read these verses, we see that it was God who sought after Paul and he was the One who initiated salvation. It was God who separated Paul from his mother's womb, called him by grace, and revealed to Paul His Son Jesus Christ. Paul had to believe the Gospel but it was God who brought everything together so that Paul could see the Truth.

**Application:**

We can be so thankful that God has done the same in our lives. He arranged the events that we needed to experience so that our hearts would be open to the Gospel and He made sure that someone stepped into our lives to preach the Gospel and then He called us. We had to exercise faith but it was God who brought it all together.

**Romans 3:10-12**

*<sup>10</sup> As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

*<sup>11</sup> There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

*<sup>12</sup> They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

We did not seek after God but God sought after us. He opened our eyes to the Truth for we were spiritually blind. God gets all the glory.

Paul was giving all praise to God for his salvation.

✓ **Paul's preparation**

**Notice Galatians 1:16b-18**

When Paul was saved, he never conferred with any other Apostles, he did not go to Jerusalem where the Apostles were, but he went to Arabia and then Damascus and then after three years he went to Jerusalem where he met with Peter for fourteen days. Why does Paul give us all these details? He is stating all of this because he wants his readers to understand that his Apostleship came from God, not because another Apostle declared him to be an Apostle. He is simply stating that men had no influence over him, it was all God. His Apostleship was from God and his message was from God. It is important to ask a question here, "Why did God take Paul into Arabia for some three years?" It would be while he was alone with God that Paul would be equipped and reprogramed to be an Apostle. God had to get him alone for this period of time to groom him for the ministry ahead.,

**Application:**

God does this with all of his servants. Many have found themselves in places where they felt as though God was doing nothing in and through them. But in those times God is at work as He recalibrates the individual for the service that is before them. Let us consider a few examples.

❖ **Moses**

**Acts 7:**

*<sup>22</sup> And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

*<sup>23</sup> And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*

*<sup>24</sup> And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:*

*<sup>25</sup> For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.*

*<sup>29</sup> Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.*

<sup>30</sup> And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

God took Moses into the wilderness for 40 years.

❖ Joseph

**Genesis 37:1-2**

*And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*

<sup>2</sup> *These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*

**Genesis 41:46**

<sup>46</sup> *And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Joseph had his dream when he was 17 years old and he went through 13 years of trials before he stood before Pharaoh as the Prime Minister of Egypt.

Paul was 3 years in Arabia because there was much to learn. God works the same way today in the lives of His people. There is always a period of time when God is breaking the individual and training them for His service. God takes His children through wilderness experiences in which it seems as though nothing is happening. But the truth is that is when God is doing His greatest work.

**Notice Galatians 1:18-19**

There was no human influence on his calling. Paul spent little time with Peter and he did see James but no other Apostles. Why not? Some believe it was because of fear in the other Apostles. Some say the Apostles were not all in Jerusalem at the time.

**Acts 9:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*

<sup>27</sup> *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

In all of this Paul is stating that the other Apostles had no influence on his Gospel for it was directly from the Lord. Notice the words of Spurgeon on what Paul is saying.

*"I did not derive my knowledge of Christ from any one of these holy men, therefore I am not an imitator of any other apostle. I was sent out by Christ himself, and instructed by him by revelation, so I am an apostle of Christ as much as any of them."*

**Notice Galatians 1:20**

Paul was willing to stand before God on his statements because they were not lies but they were the truth.

**Notice Galatians 1:21-22**

Now he tells them that he was not even close to the churches of Judaea therefore he had not been influenced by any of them. He went north into Syria away from Judaea.

**Notice Galatians 1:22-23**

To prove he was not in contact with the churches at Judaea he tells them that they did not even know his face. He had spent no time there so they did not know his face but they had heard that he preached the same faith that he had once been determined to destroy.

**Conclusion:**

**Notice Galatians 1:24**

This verse is the capstone of Paul's claims. The churches that had been taught by the other Apostles glorified God in Paul. In other words, they put their approval upon his Gospel which solidified it was not a different Gospel than they had heard. Notice the words of Lenski.

*"Instead of running down Paul as the Judaizers in Galatia did all these churches went on glorifying God 'in connection with me,' . . . All these, mark it, were Jewish churches who also had received all their news about Paul from Jerusalem itself, the very seat of the Twelve. What more can the Galatians ask? Thus by a simple recounting of the historical facts Paul sets before the Galatians what they should never have allowed anyone to make them doubt: he had his Gospel directly from God and Christ, by revelation and not at secondhand, the identical Gospel of all the other apostles, of all the churches in Judea."*