

"Paul's Defense of His Apostleship"

Galatians 1-2

Part 4

Introduction: Last week in our study we looked at Galatians 1:11-24. It was in these verses that Paul explains his independence concerning his message and his Apostleship. His message was directly from the Lord and he explained that he was not influenced by the other Apostles nor was he influenced by the churches in Judea.

Notice Galatians 1:15-24

Paul had no influence from the Apostles nor did he have any connection with the churches in Judea and he confirmed this by telling his readers that he was not known by face. They had heard of his conversion but they had not met him. They did glorify God because of the message he was preaching.

So, in Galatians 1:11-24 Paul's focus is upon his message and his **INDEPENDENCE** from all the other Apostles as well as other believers. Keep in mind that he wants his readers to know that his message was from God and God alone. Now as we come to Galatians 2:1-10 we shall see there was a unity between Paul and the other Apostles concerning the **CONTENT** of his message. When Paul did finally get with the other Apostles, they accepted his message because it was in agreement with the Gospel they preached and they also acknowledged his Apostleship.

❖ **The Acceptance of His Message**

❖ **Galatians 2:1-10**

Notice Galatians 2:1

We see here that 14 years after Paul went to Jerusalem again. The question is, "After what?"

Notice Galatians 1:17

It was 14 years after Paul went to Jerusalem for the first time. This time he went to Jerusalem with Barnabas and he took Titus with him. Some believe that this journey to Jerusalem is mentioned in Acts 11.

Acts 11:25-30

²⁵ Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

²⁷ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

²⁸ And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

²⁹ Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

³⁰ Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Notice Galatians 2:2a.

Notice that Paul went up to Jerusalem by a revelation. Some say this is pointing to the message of Agabus in Acts 11:28. He went up to take famine relief. I believe that Paul had a separate revelation because God wanted him to go to Jerusalem to meet the Apostles so that they could place their approval upon Paul's message to take away any opportunity of the critics to discredit Paul's ministry. He was also called to Jerusalem to stand for the Gentiles and the liberty they had in Christ Jesus. It was not that Paul needed the approval of the Apostles but if they joined in unity over the message of the Gospel the Judaizers would not be able to say Paul was preaching a different Gospel. Notice the words of MacArthur.

Paul emphasizes "the divine commissioning of his visit in order to refute any suggestion by the Judaizers that they had sent Paul to Jerusalem to have the apostles correct his doctrine.....During the previous seventeen years he had preached the Gospel without any human instruction, his message having been given to him entirely by God's direct revelation .

Notice Galatians 2:2

Paul was concerned that he was or that he had run in vain. This was not a concern that he had the wrong message and was preaching the wrong message to the people. He had received the message directly from the Lord so this was not a concern. His concern was that his critics would get into the mind of the Galatians and they would then make the choice to reject all of Paul's teaching. Keep in mind they were attacking his Apostleship and if they convinced the Galatians that he was not an Apostle then they could cast away all that he had taught them. The critics were probably saying that Paul has had no contact

with the Apostles because he is preaching a different message and they will have nothing to do with him. This was his concern. He wanted to let the believers at the Galatian churches know that he did have contact with the Apostles and namely with Peter, James, and John. Notice the words of Wiersbe.

"Had Paul been unwilling to wage this spiritual warfare, the church in the first century might have become only a Jewish sect, preaching a mixture of Law and grace. But because of Paul's courage, the Gospel was kept free from legalism, and it was carried to the Gentiles with great blessing. (adding that "had run in vain") "does not mean that Paul was unsure either of his message or his ministry....What he was concerned about was the future of the Gospel among the Gentiles, because this was his specific ministry from Christ. If the "pillars" (Gal 2:9) sided with the Judaizers, or tried to compromise, then Paul's ministry would be in jeopardy. He wanted to get their approval before he faced the whole assembly; otherwise a three-way division could result."

Notice Galatians 2:3

Here we see that one of Paul's companions was Titus and he was a Greek or a Gentile. We see that he was not compelled to be circumcised. Let us stop and understand circumcision. Circumcision was an outward sign in which a Jew or a Gentile would identify with the Jewish community. It was an outward sign of what God desired to within the heart of the individual.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹ But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The cutting away of the flesh was a picture of how God desired to cut away the flesh from the heart so that His people would be controlled by the Spirit and not the flesh. But the Jews missed this and they made circumcision a requirement for salvation or sanctification. When the Judaizers came into the churches of Galatia and attempted to put the believers under the Law they required circumcision.

Notice Galatians 2:3 again.

Titus a Gentile was not compelled to be circumcised. Paul is stating that in the presence of the Jewish believers and the lead Apostles there was no requirement made for Titus to be circumcised. Notice the words of Swindoll.

"The point is that even in the center of Judaism, in the presence of the original Jewish followers of Jesus, surrounded by the most Law-loving Jews in the world, nobody compelled Gentile believers to be circumcised. What sense would it make, then, for the Judaizers to insist on enforcing the rite of circumcision for Gentile believers living in the remote regions of Galatia?"

If the Judaizers doctrine was correct then the lead Apostles at Jerusalem would have compelled Titus to be circumcised.

Notice Galatians 2:4

Here in this verse we see another reason why Paul was concerned. There were false believers who had infiltrated not only the churches at Galatia but also the church at Jerusalem. It is important to notice that Paul tells his readers that they came in unawares. Peter said the same thing concerning false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

² *And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

³ *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

This is one of Satan's ways of leading the church into apostasy. He will plant false believers who will bring in their twisted doctrine.

Notice Galatians 2:4 again.

In Galatia and the other churches their desire was to put the Gentiles under the Law either for salvation or sanctification. Paul tells his readers that to be under the Law was bondage. The Judaizers wanted to steal away the liberty that the believers had in Jesus Christ.

Application:

This is what happens to the believer that is put under the Law or under a set of manmade rules. It steals away the liberty we have in Jesus and it puts the believer in bondage. The Law or the manmade rules restrict the believer. The Gospel sets us free.

John 8:31-32, 36

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Notice Galatians 2:5

Paul would not back down from these false teachers even for a moment. He stood his ground on the Truth because there was so much at stake. If this battle were lost the Gospel would be polluted.

Application:

It is very important today that we stand for the Truth of the Gospel. There are many in our society that want to pollute the True Gospel by adding works. Some are preaching a Gospel that says after salvation you can live however your flesh desires. This teaching stands against grace which the Bible says teaches us to live Godly lives.

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;

Notice Galatians 2:6

Here Paul is referencing the Apostles but he means no disrespect. He knows they are Apostles and that they are pillars in the church but they could add nothing to his message. In other words the lead Apostles recognized Paul's message as the True Gospel. Notice the words of Anderson.

"This is an amazing statement because you would expect that the key leaders—or the top brass—would add something in addition to the ministry of the Apostle Paul or at least would endeavor to correct him some way."

Notice Galatians 2:7

The Apostles could see that to Paul was trusted Gospel to carry to the Gentiles just as the Gospel was trusted to Peter for the Jews.

Notice Galatians 2:8

They could not deny that the same power that worked in Peter to reach the Jews was also working in Paul to reach the Gentiles.

Application:

I need to stop here and point out that God must be working His power in us if we are going to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we try to reach the lost in our power we will accomplish nothing but possibly false conversions.

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

In order to see the power of God in us we must be walking in fellowship.

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

²¹ Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Notice Galatians 2:9

The lead Apostles, Peter, James, and John all gave the right hand of fellowship which tells us they also agreed with the Gospel that Paul was preaching.

Conclusion

Notice Galatians 2:10

They were asked to remember the poor. Notice the words of Ironsides.

"Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." I wonder whether Paul did not smile as he heard that. They said, "You go to the Gentiles, Paul, but don't forget there are many poor saints here in Judea, and although you do not preach among us, send us a collection from time to time." He did, and thus showed that it was one Body and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling.