

## **Paul's Defense**

If grace is removed from Christianity,  
Christianity will have lost its distinction  
and ultimately dissolve into something much less.

“For by grace you have been saved ...”

### **Grace is ...**

The doctrine that justifies the ungodly  
and reveals over and over  
the absolute nature of God  
and His everlasting kindness toward us.

DIANNE PLATTER

### **Setting:**

- ❖ Paul established the churches in Galatia by the gospel of grace.

**NOW THESE CHURCHES WERE IN GREAT DANGER...**

- ❖ False teachers known as Judaizers taught that salvation was by grace plus keeping the Law of Moses.

They claimed:

1. If you remove the law you cancel the Old Testament.
2. Taking away the law will result in licentiousness.
3. If you follow Paul's teaching of salvation by grace alone, then you'll be following a false apostle.

WILLIAM MACDONALD writes,

“Their message was a mixture of Christianity and Judaism, grace and law, of Christ and Moses. They tried to turn the Galatians away from Paul by saying he was not a genuine apostle of the Lord and, therefore, his message was not reliable. They sought to destroy confidence in the message by undermining confidence in the messenger...”<sup>1</sup>

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?

Or am I striving to please men?

If I were still trying to please men,

I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. (Gal. 1:10)

if Paul were concerned about winning their approval  
would he be talking so harshly to them?

### **Paul Defends His Apostleship (Gal. 1:11-24)**

- 11** For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.
- 12** For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but / *received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The gospel Paul preached wasn't made up by any man but was divinely revealed to him. In other words the gospel's origin was Jesus Himself. This is Paul's theme for Galatians. He testifies of grace by his own testimony. *“Where would I be without grace?”*

BOICE CONTENDS:

---

<sup>1</sup> William MacDonal, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 1874.

The centrality of the cross and the resurrection do not figure in a man-made religion. Man seems always to prefer what flatters him and affirms human goodness.<sup>2</sup>

## I. Paul's Conversion -- Vs. 11-16a

This is where the gospel revelation first came to Paul,

while he was opposing the church and persecuting it.

- 13** For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;
- 14** and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

Philippians chapter 3 gives more details of Paul's former way of life:

- **a Jew by birth** [of the best stock of Israel],
- **by choice**, a Pharisee [the strictest sect of Judaism],
- **in conduct**, exceedingly zealous, a zeal demonstrated by his persecution of the church and his rigid adherence to the law.

Here he talks about how he persecuted the church beyond measure, and advanced the traditions of Judaism beyond his countrymen.

### **Paul was fanatical.**

- Violent persecution against the church.
- He destroyed beyond measure "to an extraordinary degree"

PAUL WRITES TO TIMOTHY that he "was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor." (1 TIM. 1:13).

**IN SPITE OF ALL THAT PAUL WAS DOING AGAINST CHRISTIANS, HE BECAME ONE.**

---

<sup>2</sup> James Boice, *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p. 25.

- 15 But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's  
womb and called me through His grace, was pleased  
16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the  
Gentiles

Paul's Testimony (experience of Christ) – God is emphasized!

Set apart before his birth- Election –selection “God choosing Paul”

Called by grace - Conversion

Jesus was revealed to him

– God placed the life of the Lord Jesus within him.

Commissioned to preach to the Gentiles.

-- BEYOND PERSONAL CONVERSION, IT'S CONVERTING OTHERS!

**Grace** – What God does...

Choosing, Calling, Revealing, Commissioning,

“Grace chose him.”

Paul became the example of grace to all who would come to Christ:

“And yet **for this reason** I found MERCY,

in order that in me as the foremost (*sinner*),

Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect PATIENCE,

**as an example**

for those WHO WOULD BELIEVE in Him for eternal life.”

(1 Tim. 1:16).

## II. Paul's Connection -- Vs. 16b-21

- 16 I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

- 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.
- 18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.
- 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.
- 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)
- 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (Gal. 1:16-21)

Paul retraces his steps after his divine revelation of Christ.

First of all, he meets Christ.

- 1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,
- 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- 3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;
- 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He *said*, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,
- 6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

After Paul's conversion he became a witnessing machine.

- Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,
- 20 and immediately he *began* to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."
- 21 All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and *who* had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?"
- 22 **But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this *Jesus is the Christ*.** (Acts 9:20-22)

Paul spent a few days with the disciples and then took it on the road.

**He went from persecuting Christ to preaching Christ.**

Then Paul left town to be alone with God. He met with God and studied the Scriptures. He spent quality alone time as a converted Pharisee. Imagine Paul's experience to see the risen and glorified Christ. It was a life-changing event in his life. He had some re-thinking to do.

-- A time of preparation to re-learn all he knew.

Afterwards Paul connected with the apostles, where his conversion calling and apostleship were confirmed.

- 18** Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.  
**19** But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Gal. 1:18-19)

### **III. Paul's Changed Life -- Vs. 22-24**

The same gospel of grace that Paul experienced was the one he preached: The Gospel of Grace.

- 20** (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)  
**21** Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.  
**22** I was *still* unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;  
**23** but only, they kept hearing, "HE WHO ONCE PERSECUTED US IS NOW PREACHING THE FAITH WHICH HE ONCE TRIED TO DESTROY."  
**24** And they were glorifying God because of me. (Gal. 1:20-24)

Christ made a radical difference in the life of Saul of Tarsus. Before Christ he was a committed Jew – a Pharisee, zealous for God.

Now the persecutor becomes the preacher.

**WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE IN HIS LIFE?**

It was the grace of God.

**PAUL SUBMITTED HIS MESSAGE AND MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES TO THE APOSTLES. --Galatians 2:1-2**

- 1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.
- 2 It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *I did so* in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. (Gal. 2:1-2)

**THE APOSTLES, THEMSELVES, ENDORSED PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP.**

- 7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised
- 8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),
- 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that *we might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- 10 *They only asked us* to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do. (Gal. 2:7-10)

**Paul defended his gospel** by first giving the story of his CONVERSION,  
 then by his CONNECTION (and unity) with church leadership,  
 and finally by his CHANGED LIFE.

**Grace:** The doctrine that justifies the ungodly  
 and reveals over and over  
 the absolute nature of God  
 and His everlasting kindness toward us.