

AUTHORITY OF PAUL Galatians 2:1-21

Introduction

Chapters 1-2 are a defense of Paul's authority to preach salvation by faith in Christ alone, without keeping the Law. Paul's apostolic authority is critical for justifying the faith and practices of believers today. Many Jews opposed his ministry for preaching salvation by faith in Christ without the works of the Law. They believed that faith in Christ was good, but keeping the Law was most important. Gentiles needed to keep the Law to be saved. Gentile believers needed to keep holy days and eat kosher foods to perfect their faith. Were they right or was Paul? If Paul was a true apostle, then his message was right, and New Testament believers were free from the Law.

In chapter one Paul claimed to be an apostle (1). He glorified God like an apostle (4-5). He watched over his converts like an apostle (6-7). He pronounced a curse on anyone changing the Gospel that he preached (8-9). Then in verse 10 he begins a three-fold defense of his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. **First**, he received the gospel, not from an apostle, but by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ, which radically changed his behavior and message (10-16a). **Second**, He did not seek the Apostles' approval to verify his message, but waited three years before he visited Peter in Jerusalem and met James (16b-19). His defense continues in chapter 2.

Aim of the Lesson

It is to examine Paul's claim for apostolic authority so we can be sure his message is from God.

Outline of the Lesson (Use the Study Notes to develop the lesson outline as the Spirit leads you.)

A. Reception of Paul by the Apostles (2:1-10)

Paul's **third** line of defense showed that he preached the same message as the other Apostles. How long had Paul been preaching the Gospel by the time of this meeting? 14 years

Why was it important that Barnabas and Titus go with Paul to Jerusalem? Barnabas was esteemed highly by the Apostles and had worked successfully with Paul. Titus, a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.

Did Paul make this trip to Jerusalem for famine relief (Acts 11:27-30) or to resolve the problem of circumcision for Gentiles (Acts 15:1ff)? Consider 2:2 with Act 11:28; 2:10 when you answer. For famine relief: he went to Jer. by Agabus' revelation of a famine and nothing was said about the poor in Acts 15

What significant thing did these apostles give to Paul and Barnabas? (2:9) Right hand of fellowship

B. Rebuke of Peter by Paul (2:11-21)

Paul's **final word** of defense was an incident that happened between him and Peter at Antioch. How did Peter show that he was a hypocrite while he was at Antioch? He ate with Gentiles as brothers in Christ until the Jews came, then he left the Gentiles because he feared the Jews who believed Gentiles were inferior since they did not keep the Law.

Was Paul right to rebuke of Peter publicly? Yes, Peter had sinned publicly. He had set a terrible example.

What is a good definition of justification? God (the Judge) declares a believing sinner righteous in Christ. He is pure forever and has no guilt. It is more than a pardon, which keeps a record of sin

What did Paul teach about justification? (2:16) A person is not justified by his works, but by faith in Christ's work on the cross

What things had Paul destroyed? (2:18) He destroyed the "good" works he had done by keeping the Law
How does 2:19 relate to 2:20? Paul was crucified with Christ, to fulfill the Law and now lives by Christ

PAUL'S AUTHORITY AS AN APOSTLE IS APPROVED