

Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 1

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

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If you are a Christian who spends a lot of time online, and who in particular engages a lot on the social networks, you may be aware of the fact that for quite some time now, a war has been waged between two different factions when it comes to the Apostle Paul. As I explain in some of my articles, on one side are the vicious Apostle Paul haters who will go to any length to criticize and condemn the Apostle Paul. These legalists accuse Paul of being a false Apostle, and even a devil. They also claim that Paul started the Christian faith. This latter point is my primary focus in the article called "Did the Apostle Paul Start the Christian Faith?", which you will find listed at the end of this same series.

So exactly why do these misguided people hate the Apostle Paul and attack him with such animosity? Well, quite simply, it is because in a number of his Epistles, Paul very bluntly explains the futility and the vanity of endeavoring to merit one's own Salvation through self-righteous observance of the many mandates of the Mosaic Law. That is to say, the Laws of Moses. As I more amply explain in articles such as "Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts" and "Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace", Paul repeatedly dwells upon the fact that observing the commandments -- or

the mitzvoth -- simply will not save anyone, and that only God's Grace, through faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, will save us. It is simply an issue of Law versus Grace.

So this is the central reason why so many legalists utterly hate the Apostle Paul and attack him incessantly in online forums, social networks, etc. He and his writings are a big thorn in their flesh, and his Epistles shine a brilliant light on their darkened, legalistic minds, which are unable to grasp the real reason behind why God gave the Mosaic Law in the first place. Being as I amly discuss this topic in the aforementioned articles, I don't want to delve deeply into the subject here. However, let me just say that as Paul wrote, the Law was meant to serve as a schoolmaster to bring people to Christ. Let me share just a few verses with you:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
Galatians 3:24-25, KJV

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."
Romans 3:20, KJV

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
Romans 7:7, KJV

The irony of this situation regarding the legalists -- as I also point out in the aforementioned articles -- is that not one single person on this Earth is able to keep every single mandate of the Mosaic Law. No one. That means that no one is able to save themselves by their own merit, or prove their righteousness to God. Now, just in case you are wondering, according to the Jewish rabbis, there are a total of exactly 613 mitzvoth -- or commandments -- to be found in the pages of the Old Testament. As the Apostle James wrote:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
James 2:10, KJV

At any rate, as I said, the Apostle Paul-hating extremists are on one side of this ongoing online tug-of-war regarding

the Apostle Paul. Aside from hating the Apostle Paul due to his position concerning the Law, this legalistic group of people -- there are actually different flavors of them -- also believes that only certain Hebrew names should be used with God the Father and Jesus, even though even they cannot agree on exactly which names those should be. Likewise, this group of people believes that Jewish dietary laws -- that is to say, kosher laws -- should also be followed, Jewish feast days should be observed, the Sabbath is to be kept, as well as other legalistic things.

As a reminder, the Apostle Paul addresses some of these same issues in the fourteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Roman brethren. I encourage you to read it if you haven't already done so. It is quite enlightening. A lot of these same folks are also Zionists, and thus very pro-Israel. No matter what the Israelis do, right or wrong, these people will blindly stand behind them and support them.

On the other end of the spectrum are those people who have totally gone to the opposite extreme. In other words, they in fact hold Paul in such a very high place of honor, that in my view, it borders on man worship and cult personality worship. These particular people are very easy to recognize online because they incessantly quote a set of verses which are found in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians where he writes the following:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"
1 Corinthians 15:1-4, KJV

Now, obviously, I wholeheartedly agree with what Paul writes in the previous verses. In fact, as I point out in one of my older articles called "A Biblical Cafeteria, or the Whole Course?" -- and have stated a number of times since then -- I personally have great admiration for the Apostle Paul. I am convinced that he was a hard-working, dedicated, sacrificial worker and Apostle for the Lord. He accomplished so much for the Lord during his lifetime; certainly much more than you or I have ever accomplished for the Kingdom. Furthermore, I

truly enjoy reading all of his Epistles, and I have learned so much from them. They have really expanded my understanding over the years. Romans and Hebrews are two of my favorites.

The problem that I have with this second group, of whom I am going to refer to as Pauline extremists, is that they seem to focus on the Apostle Paul to the exclusion of everything else that is found in the New Testament. While surfing the various social networks, I have repeatedly found these people saying such things as "Our gospel is from Romans to Philemon", and "Paul is our apostle". Likewise, some of these people -- I do not know if they all believe this -- have erroneously claimed that until the Apostle Paul came along, Jesus' Death, Burial and Resurrection was a total mystery to everyone; and that by extension, the resurrection of the dead in general was also a mystery as well.

In other words, if I understand these people correctly, they are claiming that Paul was the very first person to proclaim this message regarding the resurrection of the dead. Well, I am sorry to disagree, my friends, but this claim is patently false, as I will prove momentarily. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 above, the Apostle Paul makes three key points, which are as follows:

1. Christ died for our sins
2. He was buried
3. He rose again the third day

Please notice that he also says "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received." Exactly what is Paul referring to here? The answer is easily found in the following verse where Paul is writing to the brethren at Galatia, who, sadly, had fallen back under the bondage of the Mosaic Law:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

So, Paul is saying that everything that he is now preaching was taught to him directly by Jesus Christ. Personally, I'm not exactly sure what that means. Following his miraculous encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, is he saying that he continued to have encounters with the Lord, during

which time the Lord opened the Scriptures to him and showed him everything that he was supposed to preach? Let us not forget that following that fateful encounter, Paul informs the Galatian brethren that he "conferred not with flesh and blood", but that he went into Arabia, before he eventually returned to Damascus, as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."
Galatians 1:15-17, KJV

So perhaps the Apostle Paul is stating that while he was in Arabia, the Lord taught him directly. After all, if Jesus was able to appear out of thin air to the Apostles following His resurrection, and then later also appear to more than five hundred witnesses during the forty days that He stayed on the Earth, then why could He not do the same thing with the Apostle Paul? Even though He had ascended to Heaven by this time -- which occurred approximately ten days before the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two -- Jesus could have still appeared to Paul in Spirit form, just as He did on the road to Damascus. On the other hand, perhaps Paul is simply referring to the fact that he was instructed regarding what to preach by the Holy Spirit, as in the following group of verses:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
John 14:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
John 16:13, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
James 1:5, KJV

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalms 119:18, KJV

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

1 John 2:27, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

Regardless of how we choose to interpret Paul's words, one of the main points I want to get across to you is the fact that the message which Paul preached consisted of the very same things which Jesus likewise said during His time on the Earth. As I have pointed out on previous occasions, in all my fifty plus years of seriously studying the Scriptures -- including delving deeply into the writings of the Apostle Paul -- I have never once found any occasion where Paul has contradicted anything that Jesus said or taught. They are in perfect harmony with each other. And why wouldn't they be if Jesus revealed these things directly to Paul following his conversion?

To prove my point, let us examine the three things that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. First of all, Paul wrote that "Christ died for our sins". Did Jesus ever say anything like this? As I amply explain in the three-part series entitled "The Blood Atonement: In Jesus' Own Words", the Lord most certainly did. Consider the following set of sample verses:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:28, KJV

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:28, KJV

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45, KJV

"And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:24, KJV

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:20, KJV

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13, KJV

The Apostle Paul also wrote concerning Jesus that "he was buried, and that he rose again the third day." Did Jesus ever speak about this? Again, as we all know, or at least should know, the Lord most certainly did, as is clearly evidenced by the following group of verses:

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Matthew 12:40, KJV

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Matthew 16:21, KJV

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry."

Matthew 17:22-23, KJV

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again."

Matthew 20:18-19, KJV

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he

was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

Matthew 27:62-66, KJV

"And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him."

Mark 9:30-32, KJV

"And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again."

Mark 10:32-34, KJV

"And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

Luke 9:21-22, KJV

"The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

Luke 13:31-32, KJV

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles,

and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."

Luke 18:31-33, KJV

"He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Luke 24:6-7, KJV

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:45-47, KJV

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

John 2:19-22, KJV

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

John 12:32, KJV

What we clearly see then from all of the previous verses is that the Apostle Paul preached the very same message that Jesus shared with the Twelve Apostles during His time on the Earth. There was no difference between their messages. They were identical in content and in harmony with each other. In short, what the Apostle Paul preached was NOT a new message or even a mystery, and it was NOT the first time that it was being heard, as some of these Pauline extremists erroneously like to claim. Maybe the Apostles didn't fully understand it at first, but Jesus did plainly tell them multiple times what was going to happen before it happened, and why it was going to happen. Let there be no doubt about that.

So the next question we need to ask ourselves is if any of

the Apostles preached this same message before the Apostle Paul began his public ministry. If you are familiar with the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, then you will already know that the answer is again a very resounding "Yes!", as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: WHOM GOD HATH RAISED UP, HAVING LOOSED THE PAINS OF DEATH: BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL, NEITHER WILT THOU SUFFER THINE HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, HE WOULD RAISE UP CHRIST to sit on his throne; He seeing this before SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THAT HIS SOUL WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL, NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION. THIS JESUS HATH GOD RAISED UP, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 2:22-38, KJV

"And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly

on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, WHOM GOD HATH RAISED FROM THE DEAD; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. REPENT ye therefore, and be converted, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"

Acts 3:12-19, KJV

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give REPENTANCE to Israel, and FORGIVENESS OF SINS. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

Acts 5:29-32, KJV

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him GOD RAISED UP THE THIRD DAY, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him AFTER HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name

whosoever believeth in him shall receive REMISSION OF SINS."
Acts 10:34-43, KJV

So here again we see the same three points being preached by Peter and the other Apostles. Let me enumerate them again for you one more time so that you can clearly see that the very same message was being preached by Jesus in the Gospels, by the Apostles in the Book of Acts, and by the Apostle Paul in his Epistles. It is the very same consistent message in which the remission of sins is discussed, and the death, burial and resurrection of Christ on the third day is discussed:

1. Christ died for our sins
2. He was buried
3. He rose again the third day

With all of the previous Scriptural evidence, I believe that I have laid to rest the erroneous claim being made by these Pauline extremists that the Apostle Paul preached something new and different, which they assert was a mystery before the Apostle Paul began preaching it. Again, it just isn't so. How was what Paul preached any different? It simply wasn't.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 2

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

Romans 16:25-27: Was Apostle Paul First Person To Reveal The Mystery Of God?, The Mystery Of God Explained, Bible Verses That Reveal The Mystery, Raising People From The Dead In The Gospels Was A Hint Of The Mystery, Lazarus Is Raised From The Dead, Elijah Revives The Son Of The Widow Of Zarephath, How Would The Patriarch Job Even Know?, Miraculous Resurrection Of Jesus Christ, Jewish Religionists' Attempt To Hide Jesus'

Resurrection, Other Saints Raised From The Dead, Paul Was Not Very First Person To Reveal The Mystery Of God, The Apostles Shared The Account Of The Resurrected Christ To A Huge Crowd In Acts 2, Geographical Extent Of Their Witness, Philip Goes To Samaria Followed By Witnessing To Ethiopian Eunuch In The South, Result Of Philip's Obedience And Faithfulness, Oldest Modern Christian Communities, Apostle Paul Was Last Apostle To Witness The Resurrected Christ, There Is Only One Gospel Not Two, Importance Of Remembering Simplicity Of The Gospel

Continuing our discussion from part one, from everything I have read online, it seems that this doctrine regarding Paul revealing a mystery which had never been heard or preached before is based -- erroneously so -- on the following group of verses which are found in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans:

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea."

Romans 16:25-27, KJV

Now, according to certain online posts and comments I have read, these Pauline extremists erroneously state that in the previous verses, due to the fact he uses the phrase "now is made manifest", the Apostle Paul is claiming to have been the very first person to make known a certain mystery to the world. Derived from the Koine Greek word "phaneroo", that is exactly what the word "manifest" means. That is to say, to make known, or to make visible. So when Paul uses the phrase "revelation of the mystery", he is talking about a certain mystery which had been kept secret since the beginning of the world, until the First Century, but which according to these Pauline extremists, he was revealing for the very first time.

Exactly what secret mystery is Paul talking about? This is a subject which I first addressed in my 1999 three-part series entitled "The Born-Again Experience: Now or Later?", which I will now proceed to explain to you again. I began our current

discussion concerning the Pauline extremists by sharing with you four verses which are found in the Apostle Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. Let me share those verses with you yet again to refresh your memory:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, KJV

As you can see, in addition to stating that Christ died for our sins, the Apostle Paul informs us that the other part of the Gospel message he is preaching concerns the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, if you take the time to read that chapter in its entirety, you will quickly discover that the resurrection of the dead is in fact the main theme of the entire chapter. In other words, Paul is telling his readers exactly what the "revelation of the mystery" really is, which he previously mentioned in Romans 16:25-27. If you doubt that this is so, allow me to share with you some of the key verses which deal with this particular subject. You may be surprised to learn that this mystery was even spoken about in the Old Testament:

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, THE MYSTERY OF GOD should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

Revelation 10:7, KJV

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY, which was kept secret since the world began."

Romans 16:25, KJV

"Behold, I SHEW YOU A MYSTERY; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, KJV

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."
Job 19:25-27, KJV

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."
Isaiah 26:19, KJV

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."
Romans 8:23, KJV

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle [meaning our body of flesh] were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."
2 Corinthians 5:1-4, KJV

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, KJV

So THAT, my friends, is the Mystery of God of which some of the Prophetsof old, as well as the Apostle Paul, spoke. In

fact, as you will see shortly, Jesus likewise spoke of this great mystery, which really wasn't such a mystery after all, considering how much it was spoken about BEFORE the Apostle Paul began his public ministry. Thus, while certain Pauline extremists like to claim that the Apostle Paul was the first person to reveal this mystery to the world, there is simply no truth to this claim whatsoever. In fact, the mystery of God was revealed -- or at the very least, hinted at -- the minute that Jesus Christ began raising people from the dead in the Gospels. For example, we have the ruler's daughter in Matthew chapter nine and Mark chapter five, as we see by the following group of verses:

"While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the rulers house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land."

Matthew 9:18-26, KJV

"While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogues house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted,

Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat."

Mark 5:35-43, KJV

Of course, the story which is undoubtedly most familiar to both Christians and non-Christians alike concerns the raising from the dead of Jesus' close friend, Lazarus, as found in the Gospel of John chapter eleven. In fact, consider exactly what Jesus said to Martha in that chapter. I am including two additional verses which are found in John chapter five as well:

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

John 11:23-27, KJV

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

John 5:28-29, KJV

In thinking about this issue, we have to ask ourselves this question: If the resurrection of the dead was such a mystery before the Apostle Paul began preaching and writing about it, then exactly how is it that the Patriarch Job would even know to say "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"? It seems to me that even the Prophet Elijah raising the son of the widow of Zarephath from the dead was likewise a hint of things to come. Consider this abbreviated version of the story, as found in 1 Kings 17:

"And the word of the LORD came unto him [Elijah], saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath . . . And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman,

the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth."

1 Kings 17:8-10, 17-24, KJV

While these were indeed astounding miracles of resurrection, nothing could have prepared the Apostles and other Disciples for what they would witness when Christ Himself rose from the dead, after they watched Him being cruelly tortured, and made to suffer a very agonizing and very public death on a Roman cross. They were eyewitnesses to this horrifying event, just as they -- and eventually, about five hundred other people -- were also witnesses to Jesus' bodily resurrection three days later. As I have mentioned previously, the unbelieving and hard-hearted Jewish religionists were so frightened by this amazing event, that they even tried to cover it up, as we see by the following group of verses:

"Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governors ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

Matthew 28:11-15, KJV

As if the Lord's own miraculous resurrection from the dead was not already enough evidence to convince people that He

truly was, and is, the Messiah, in his Gospel, Matthew informs us that following Jesus' resurrection, many of the Saints were raised from the dead as well, and appeared in Jerusalem to many people. In other words, it seems that God really wanted to emphasize the point that resurrection from the dead is a reality, and that He is more than able to fulfill His word and keep His promises. Consider this set of verses:

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Matthew 27:50-53, KJV

As we discussed earlier, what we have also seen is that prior to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in Acts chapter nine, and his subsequent public ministry -- first to his own countrymen the Jews themselves, and then later to the Gentiles as well -- the Apostles were ALREADY preaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So exactly what can we learn from all these various accounts? We learn that, contrary to what some of the Pauline extremists like to erroneously claim, "the revelation of the mystery" was well known to the people of Israel -- in particular, in Jerusalem and Judah -- BEFORE the Apostle Paul began writing about it in his Epistles, and talking about it as he went about preaching in the Mediterranean region and southern Europe.

To be fair about this, what I will agree to is the fact that the Apostle Paul was one of the first preachers -- if not the very first individual -- to announce the "revelation of the mystery" to the Jews and Gentiles who lived OUTSIDE of Israel proper. Thus, when he writes "But now is made manifest", he is being truthful in a technical sense. However, again, Paul still was NOT the first Apostle to reveal the mystery of the resurrection from the dead. In fact, as you may already be aware, following their baptism by fire in Acts chapter two, Luke informs us that the Apostles spoke of the resurrected Christ to a huge, multiethnic crowd of people, as we can clearly see by the following group of verses:

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised

abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"

Acts 2:5-12, KJV

As I explain in the article "Are the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?", if we translate all of the aforementioned names to their modern counterparts, we discover that God performed this miracle in order to broadcast the message of Salvation and the good news -- or Gospel -- of the resurrected Christ to people who were native to a region which extended from Italy, to Greece, to Turkey, to Syria, to Iraq, to Iran, all the way over to the nations of North Africa and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. It was a huge witnessing campaign. It was a significant telecast by the Holy Spirit via the Apostles.

To give you one more example, in Acts chapter eight -- which is one chapter before the conversion of Saul of Tarsus in the ninth chapter -- we read about the great persecution which occurred due to the misguided activities of Saul of Tarsus and his cohorts. As the following verses explain, this great persecution resulted in the Jerusalem Church being scattered from Judaea up to Samaria in the north. It was precisely in this way that the Apostle Philip found himself preaching the resurrected Christ in Samaria. In fact, Philip's witnessing campaign in Samaria was so successful, that Peter and John went up and joined him there as well:

"And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] 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 . . . Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying

with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city . . . But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women . . . Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:"

Acts 8:1, 5-8, 12, 14-15, KJV

Following his successful witnessing campaign in Samaria, the Lord then instructed Philip to go in the opposite direction and head south towards Gaza along the Mediterranean coast. As you may know, it was there where Philip met the Ethiopian man who was the treasurer under Queen Candace of the Ethiopians. And surprise, surprise! The man was reading Isaiah 53 which prophesies of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. However, as we read in the set of verses below, the Ethiopian eunuch did not understand what he was reading, until Philip explained to him the Crucifixion, Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ:

"And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou

mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

Acts 8:26-40, KJV

I don't know if it is true or not, but it has been said that as a direct result of this man coming to the Lord, and then faithfully reporting everything back to the queen, that the nation of Ethiopia embraced Christianity. The fact that God thought it important enough to send Philip to meet this man, would seem to validate this belief to some degree. In fact, it is my understanding that the Ethiopians have some of the oldest Christian communities in the world, along with the Coptic Church in Egypt, the Chaldean Christians in Iraq, the Armenian Church, and the Christian communities in Syria.

So what we see then, is that while Saul of Tarsus was still a very proud, self-righteous, angry, determined man, who due to being poisoned with so much hatred towards the fledgling Christian Church, was quite busy persecuting the Church in Acts chapter eight and the opening verses of Acts chapter nine, the Apostles were ALREADY busy themselves preaching the Crucifixion, Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ. To reiterate, they had ALREADY begun revealing the mystery of the resurrection to the world. Not only were they sharing the Gospel message from the northern extreme of Israel to the southern extreme, but as we have seen, they were in fact reaching people from all around the Mediterranean Sea, and as far eastward as Iraq and Iran.

In light of this information, it is hard to accept the claim which has been made by some Pauline extremists, that God had first given the "revelation of the mystery" to Paul, and that he was the first person to reveal it to the world. As I said earlier, yes, Paul was the first person to reveal it to many of the Gentiles who resided outside of Israel, but he was NOT the first in the truest sense of the word. Furthermore, as he himself writes, he was the last of the Apostles to have seen the resurrected Christ, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses. As such, chronologically speaking, there is no way that he could have been the first person to

reveal the mystery of the resurrection, no matter how we look at it:

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 Corinthians 15:5-9, KJV

To reiterate an earlier point I made, the fact of the matter is that there is only ONE Gospel, and it was the same Gospel, and the same core message which was preached by Jesus, by the Apostles, and eventually by the Apostle Paul as well. There is no distinction in the message they each preached. There is not one Gospel which is specifically designed for the Jews, and another separate Gospel which is specifically designed for the Gentiles, meaning those of us who are of non-Jewish stock. It just isn't so, my friends.

After all, it should be obvious to you that there is only ONE Savior who died ONE time for the sins of ALL MEN everywhere. Thus, to try to split it into two separate Gospels with two different messages is divisive, confusing, and quite frankly, rather unscriptural. In my opinion, the people who are doing this, and promoting this belief, are complicating the message and forgetting the simplicity of the Gospel message. I urge such people to remember the following verses:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

2 Corinthians 11:3, KJV

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3, KJV

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19:14, KJV

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ

Jesus."
Galatians 3:26, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16, KJV

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31, KJV

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"
John 1:12, KJV

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
Romans 10:9-10, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 3

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

The Core Gospel Message Was The Same But Paul's Audience Was Different, Jesus Instructed Apostles To Only Preach To House Of Israel, Peter's Vision: Green Light To Reach The Gentiles, Old Testament Prophecies Regarding Jesus Being A Light To The Gentiles, Circumcision And Uncircumcision: There Is No Longer A Distinction Between Jew And Gentile, Only One Fold And One

Shepherd, Why Gospel Message May Have Initially Been Withheld From The Gentiles, Proof Of Jesus' Global Missionary Vision, Adopted Children Of God, Paul Turns To The Gentiles Following His Being Rejected By The Jews, Two Separate Ministries, The Legalistic Jews' Animosity Towards Gentile Converts, Jewish Legalism Creeps Into First Century Church, Battle Between Law And Grace, The Unbelieving Jews Sought To Establish Their Own Righteousness, Either We Are Saved By Grace Or By The Law And Our Own Self-Righteous Works, Lest Any Man Should Boast

Continuing our discussion from part two, this leads us to our next point of discussion, and that is the following: While the core elements of the Gospel message which Jesus, the Apostles, and eventually the Apostle Paul, preached was the same -- as I have already amply and clearly demonstrated through a plethora of Scriptures -- nevertheless, there are a few differences which we should recognize. The biggest and most obvious difference between the Apostle Paul and other Apostles, was NOT in the context of the Gospel message they preached, but rather to whom their message was addressed. As you may know, when Jesus began instructing the Apostles, He told them that the message they were being given was to be shared with the people of Israel. At that particular time, it was not yet meant to be announced to the Gentiles. This point is evidenced by verses such as these:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But GO RATHER TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 10:5-7, KJV

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I AM NOT SENT BUT UNTO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy

faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Matthew 15:22-28, KJV

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS."

John 4:22, KJV

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, PREACHING THE WORD TO NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY."

Acts 11:19, KJV

While the Gospel message was originally intended to be given only to the Israelites, we know from the Scriptures that it was in fact God's design and intention from the very start for that message to also eventually be taken to the Gentile nations, and that that is exactly what eventually occurred. In fact, as I have shared before, it was in Acts chapter ten where the Lord confirmed to the Apostle Peter that it was time to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel message. Please note that as I explain in the article entitled "Fifty Days Which Changed the World", from the time that the Lord was crucified during the Passover feast, to the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, was only fifty days. How much time transpired between Acts chapter two and Acts chapter ten is hard to say. At any rate, please consider the following verses which are found in chapters ten and eleven:

"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."

Acts 10:9-16, KJV

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the mans house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Acts 11:1-18, KJV

The fact of the matter is that even in the Old Testament, we find verses which confirm that Jesus was indeed prophesied to become a light to the Gentile nations. His message, and the Salvation which His own Death on the Cross would provide, was not meant to be restricted to the Jews alone forever. The day would arrive when the Gentiles would also trust in Jesus for their Salvation as well. Consider the following set of verses:

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles

seek: and his rest shall be glorious."

Isaiah 11:10, KJV

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGMENT TO THE GENTILES. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, FOR A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

Isaiah 42:1-7, KJV

"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and HE SHALL SHEW JUDGMENT TO THE GENTILES. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. AND IN HIS NAME SHALL THE GENTILES TRUST."

Matthew 12:17-21, KJV

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES TRUST."

Romans 15:9-12, KJV

So, as I said, because in His divine wisdom, God the Father had designed a plan whereby the Israelites and Jews would be presented with the Gospel message first, followed later by the Gentiles as well, once the green light was given to the Apostle Peter, this is exactly what happened. With Peter's

revelation, the Church in Jerusalem came to understand that it was now time for the Gospel message to be extended to the Gentiles too. Peter in fact led the way when he went to the home of Cornelius. Of course, this change in attitude is most noticeable in the writings of the Apostle Paul, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"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."

Romans 1:16, KJV

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS."

Galatians 3:28, KJV

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION BETWEEN US; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE BOTH UNTO GOD [meaning Jew and Gentile] in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Ephesians 2:11-18, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Ephesians 2:19-22, KJV

While in the Gospels, Jesus told the Apostles that they were only to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, I

am reminded of a verse where the Lord said something which suggests to me that He may have already been dropping a hint that while for the time being, they would all concentrate on reaching the Israelites, the day would eventually arrive when their mission would be greatly expanded to include the entire Gentile world. That verse is the following one:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

John 10:16, KJV

There are a number of other Scriptures which seem to support my notion that for whatever His reasons, Jesus simply wasn't ready to reveal the full missionary plan to the Apostles yet, even though He himself was fully aware of it. While it's just personal speculation on my part, maybe withholding the Gospel message from the Gentiles was meant to give the Lord time to properly train and equip the Apostles for the huge job which lie ahead, once the full Gospel message was presented to the Gentile world. For example, up until that point in time, the Apostles had not received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That Jesus already did possess a vision for the world is clearly evident in the following group of verses:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL MEN unto me."

John 12:32, KJV

"For God so loved THE WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that THE WORLD through him might be saved."

John 3:16-17, KJV

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life UNTO THE WORLD . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD."

John 6:33, 51, KJV

"And he said unto them, Go ye INTO ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark 16:15, KJV

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them INTO THE WORLD."

John 17:18, KJV

"Jesus answered him, I spake openly TO THE WORLD; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing."

John 18:20, KJV

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH."

Acts 1:8, KJV

So as you can plainly see by the previous group of verses, the Lord's overall vision and ultimate goal was in fact for every single individual in the world to eventually hear the Gospel message, and as a result of hearing it, also have an opportunity to become a member of the Kingdom of God, and to be adopted into God's family. This matter of spiritual adoption is made clearly evident in verses such as these:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

John 1:12, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but YE HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Romans 8:15-17, 22-23, KJV

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:26, KJV

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth

his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."
Galatians 4:4-6, KJV

"Having predestinated us UNTO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS CHRIST to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"
Ephesians 1:5, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"
Ephesians 2:19, KJV

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
2 Timothy 2:19, KJV

Of course, when the Apostle Paul first began preaching the Gospel message, he too only approached those of his own nation. That is to say, the Jews. However, as I have pointed out before, once the unbelieving Jews rejected that message, Paul turned to the Gentiles, and thus became the Apostle to the Gentiles, who the self-righteous Jews referred to as the Uncircumcision, because they were uncircumcised, and did not abide by Jewish laws and customs. Consider the following set of Bible verses which confirm this point:

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I HAVE SET THEE TO BE A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."
Acts 13:46-47, KJV

"And he [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own

heads; I am clean: FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL GO UNTO THE GENTILES."

Acts 18:4-6, KJV

"And he [the Lord] said unto me [Paul], Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Acts 22:21, KJV

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, AND TO THE GENTILES."

Acts 26:22-23, KJV

"For I [Paul] speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, I magnify mine office:"

Romans 11:13, KJV

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, THAT I SHOULD BE THE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

Romans 15:13-16, KJV

"For I [Paul] am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

1 Corinthians 15:9, KJV

"For I [Paul] think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

1 Corinthians 4:9, KJV

"Whereunto I [Paul] am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) A TEACHER OF THE GENTILES in faith and verity."

1 Timothy 2:7, KJV

"Whereunto I [Paul] am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and A TEACHER OF THE GENTILES."

2 Timothy 1:11-12, KJV

As we have seen, while the central Gospel message which was preached by Jesus, by the Twelve Apostles, and lastly by the Apostle Paul was the same -- meaning that Jesus died for the sins of the world and was buried and resurrected -- the time came when the audience to whom that message was directed was divided into two: the original Apostles to the Circumcision -- meaning the Jews -- and the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles, who the legalistic Jews self-righteously referred to as the Uncircumcision.

While some of the Jews outright rejected the Gospel message entirely -- which, as we have seen, was why the Apostle Paul ultimately turned to the Gentiles -- there were other Jews who accepted the new doctrine concerning Christ, but yet who still had some reservations regarding Salvation being made available to the Gentiles. This becomes quite evident by two verses I shared with you earlier where Peter confronts the legalistic Jewish brethren in Jerusalem following his vision where the Lord told him to extend the Gospel to the Gentiles. Please consider the following:

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Acts 11:2-3, KJV

As you can see, they were not the least bit happy regarding this new development. Those pompous, sanctimonious, very self-righteous religionists not only thought that they were better than the Gentiles, but they were offended that Peter would even dare to sit down and eat with them. However, this was NOT the end of it. As I more amply explain in some of my other articles, while they may have embraced Christ, at the same time, just like the Apostle Paul haters I described for you at the beginning of this series, they also believed that they were still required to adhere to the Laws of Moses, to follow Jewish kosher laws, to celebrate all of the Jewish feast days, to be circumcised, etc.

In other words, similar to the modern Apostle Paul haters of our own day -- and sadly, to many other modern Christians as well -- while they accepted Christ, those Jews also believed

that they had to do all of these legalistic things in order to help Christ to save them, and to keep themselves saved. In other words, they had one foot firmly on the Law, while their other foot stood upon Grace. They were trying to mix God's Grace through faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with their own self-righteous works.

In short, those legalistic Jews just were NOT prepared to let go entirely of their own futile endeavors in the flesh. They were not willing to leave behind their schoolmaster -- that is, the Laws of Moses -- and embrace Jesus Christ fully by faith, and trust in Him alone for their Salvation. In the case of those Jews who rejected Christ entirely, they still believed that they could establish their own righteousness before God without the need for Jesus. As the Apostle Paul so elegantly wrote:

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
Romans 10:1-4, KJV

As I point out in a number of other articles, some of which are listed at the end of this same series, we either believe that we are saved by God's Grace alone through our faith in the atoning Sacrifice of His dear Son, or else we trust in our own works of the flesh. There is simply no mixing of the two. The Apostle Paul makes this quite clear in verses such as the following:

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."
Romans 11:6, KJV

"For BY GRACE are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

"Therefore we conclude that a man is JUSTIFIED BY FAITH
without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:28, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law
by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another,
even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should
bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

"For CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW for righteousness to every
one that believeth."

Romans 10:4, KJV

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness
come by the law, then CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN."

Galatians 2:21, KJV

"But that NO MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW in the sight of
God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith . . .
CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, being
made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one
that hangeth on a tree:"

Galatians 3:11, 13, KJV

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you
are justified by the law; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE."

Galatians 5:4, KJV

My friends, honestly, can the truth be any clearer than that?
Please notice that in Ephesians 2:8-9, the Apostle Paul says
"lest any man should boast." You see, if we can really trust
in our own works and our righteousness to save us, not only
did Christ die in vain, as Paul writes, but it also gives us
opportunity to get the big head, become lifted up in pride,
pat ourselves on the back, and boast about how good and holy
we are, and how great we are. It sounds very much like the
unbelieving Scribes and the Pharisees, doesn't it?

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

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Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 4

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

Paul Travels To Jerusalem For Clarification And Confirmation Of His Gospel, Jesus Selects Peter James And John As His Core Leadership, The Truth Shall Make You Free, The Results Of The Jerusalem Meeting, Church Elders Embraced A Gospel Of Grace Alone And Not Of Works, Restrictions Set On Gentile Converts, They Made No Requirement For Gentiles To Keep The Law, Modern Legalists Are Contradicting The Pattern Established By First Century Church, Modern-Day Scribes And Pharisees, Jerusalem Elders Made No Requirement For The Gentile Converts To Keep The Sabbath, Reasons Given For Why Certain Christians Like To Keep The Sabbath Observe Jewish Feast Days And Follow Other Jewish Customs, Blinded By Zionist Propaganda, Some Churches Have Been Overrun By Zionism, Modern Politicized Christianity, Israel-Gaza War, Ekklesia: Remaining Separate From The World, My Personal Word To The Legalists, Romans 14, Clash Between Jewish Legalists And Jewish Christians Endured For Decades, Law-Bound Jews Were A Constant Thorn In Apostle Paul's Side, Apostle Paul's Final Clash With The Legalists In Jerusalem, Jesus Said "For Ye Shut Up The Kingdom Of Heaven Against Men", God's Plan To Eventually Send Paul To Rome, Paul Witnessed To Royals, Paul's "My Gospel", Three-Point Gospel, Paul In Athens

Continuing our discussion from part three, as I point out in articles such as "Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts", this problem regarding Jewish legalism infiltrating the Lord's Church became so great, that the Apostle Paul was finally forced to travel to Jerusalem in order to come to an agreement with the Church Elders there. In other words, Paul was seeking for both clarification and confirmation of the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles. As we know from reading the four Gospels, Jesus personally appointed Peter, James and John as His inner circle of leaders. Thus, they are also the central leadership in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts. Following are a few verses which confirm this point:

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,"
Matthew 17:1, KJV

"And he [Jesus] suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James."
Mark 5:37, KJV

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them."
Mark 9:2, KJV

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,"
Mark 13:3, KJV

"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;"
Mark 14:32-33, KJV

"And when he [Jesus] came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden."
Luke 8:51, KJV

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray."
Luke 9:28, KJV

"And when James, Cephas [Peter], 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."
Galatians 2:9, KJV

As you will see by the Scriptures below, the leadership in Jerusalem clearly agreed with Paul that circumcision -- and other aspects of Jewish law, traditions and customs -- were not applicable to the Gentile converts. In other words, such things were not necessary in order for the Gentile converts

to obtain Salvation. Furthermore, it is in fact Peter and James who voice their opinions in the following verses. Let me mention here that for the sake of brevity, I have only included the key verses below. I encourage you to read the entire chapter, as your time permits. It is quite an interesting read:

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren . . . Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Acts 15:7, 10-11, KJV

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me . . . Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

Acts 15:13, 19-20, KJV

"And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment . . . For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

Acts 15: 23-24, 28-29, KJV

Before fully discussing the previous group of verses, let me interject one thing. Please notice that Peter says ". . . why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" This is in fact a reference to what the Lord said in Matthew chapter eleven, John chapter eight, and elsewhere in the Gospels. For a full explanation of the following verses, please refer to my three-part series called "What Does 'The Truth Shall Make You Free' Really Mean?":

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
John 8:31-32, 36, KJV

Now, allow me to call your attention to a few things in the previous group of verses which describe the Church meeting that was held in Jerusalem. First of all, notice that Peter says "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved." My friends, you cannot get much clearer than that. By saying "through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ", Peter is plainly stating that no other laws, customs, traditions or conditions are required -- just Jesus -- which is exactly what Paul was preaching as well. Stated another way, despite the legalism which had begun to creep into the Church in Jerusalem, the core leadership there still embraced a Gospel based on God's Grace alone, and NOT on self-righteous works.

After that, you will notice that the Apostle James continues by outlining only four restrictions -- and not hundreds of difficult-to-keep statutes of the Mosaic Law -- from which the Gentile converts should abstain themselves. Those four restrictions were idolatry, food which contains blood, meat from animals that are strangled, and fornication. These four things -- and only these four things -- were included in the letters which they sent to the Gentile brethren.

Furthermore, the core leadership of the Church in Jerusalem made it clear that they personally never issued any kind of order stating that Gentile Believers had to be circumcised. They wrote "we gave no such commandment". But that isn't all. Notice what else their short letter stated. Not only do the Apostles clear their own name by stating that they never gave an order for Gentile converts to be circumcised, but we also see that they gave no commandment to "keep the law". Wow! My friends, it is right there in black and white. What law are Peter, James and John referring to? Obviously the Mosaic Law. They are clearly writing that they never gave any order for

Gentile Believers to keep the Laws of Moses. They in fact refused to place such a heavy burden on the Gentile converts, exactly as Peter clearly stated above. Now isn't that just amazing?

Yet tragically, as we have already amply discussed, today we have legalists and Apostle Paul haters who are endeavoring to do that very thing. They are working their hardest to place modern-day Christian Believers back under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, and other Jewish laws, customs and traditions. In a sense, they are trying to convert New Testament Christians into Old Testament law-observing Jews! By so doing, they are in fact contradicting the very pattern which was established by the First Century Church regarding Gentile Believers. It is the same legalistic attack as two thousand years ago! I hope that just my saying this will wake up some of you folks to the legalistic folly in which you are currently engaged.

As I said earlier, these misguided, legalistic deceivers are the modern-day version of the Scribes and the Pharisees who placed the very same heavy burden on the people in the four Gospels. There is no difference. They are just as proud, and just as argumentative. If you don't agree with them, some of them will even go so far as to accuse you of not even being a real Christian. That is how blind and how deceived they are. Trust me, I have read enough of their comments to know. That is why I ignore them like the plague. I do NOT engage them.

Now, in addition to the six hundred plus commandments which form a part of Jewish law, do you notice anything important that is missing from the Apostles' letter to the Gentiles? It is in fact something that's quite heavily promoted by so many Christian legalists and Judaizers today. If not, as I mention in the article entitled "Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?", it is the Sabbath observance. If you are heavily engaged in the social networks, then you will probably know that every week without fail, many Christians will post on their pages how they are keeping the Sabbath, and they will wish their friends a happy Sabbath. Personally, I just sigh.

Returning to Acts 15, so that we have zero doubts regarding exactly what was said to the Gentile Believers, those four abstentions are mentioned twice in the previous verses, and not once is observing the Sabbath mentioned among them. The three individuals who Jesus appointed as His inner circle, and who became the leaders of His First Century Church, did not enforce Sabbath observance on the First Century Gentile

converts. Thus, we are forced to ask ourselves where this modern-day legalistic requirement came from. Certainly not from Jesus or the Apostles.

Let me add that sometimes, Christian Judaizers will inform me that one reason why they like to observe the Sabbath and other Jewish feast days, follow kosher laws, and do all of the other things that they do, is not because they believe that it really saves them, or because they believe that it helps God to save them, but because they are convinced that they are pleasing God by obeying Him. However, in my view, if the Early Church never required such things of Gentile converts, then how can doing such things really be pleasing to the Lord? As I pointed out a minute ago, we are NOT Old Testament Jews. We are New Testament Christians. As such, we should follow the pattern which was established by the First Century Church. That pattern never included forcing any of the Gentile converts to do such things.

Now, while this will probably offend some of my readers who may be of that persuasion, let me say this: Quite frankly, my personal impression is that the real reason why some of them so readily bow to so much Jewish legalism, is because they are actually trying to improve, or perhaps prove, how Jewish they are -- even though they are really Gentiles in the flesh -- and show exactly how much they love and support the state of Israel. In a word, they have been duped by and blinded by Zionist propaganda. If you doubt that this is so, simply visit some of the modern churches where Zionism has taken a very strong hold. You may begin to wonder if you are in a Christian church, or in a Jewish synagogue.

As I have mentioned before, in the USA at least, the problem with Jewish legalism and Zionism encroaching on our faith has become so great -- due to a number of popular preachers and pastors who promote this particular point of view, such as John Hagee and Christians United for Israel -- that certain Christians now embrace the misguided notion that if someone doesn't support Israel in her war against the Muslim nations, he is really not even a true Christian. In short, they have politicized our faith, which is something which Jesus never intended in the least.

In fact, to prove my point, as I write this current series, the Israeli military is still fully engaged in its terrible, destructive war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, following the supposedly surprise incursion of Hamas into Israel on

October 7, 2023, which resulted in over 1,200 Israelis being killed, and several hundred hostages being taken into Gaza. As I recently mentioned in another new series, it surprises and shocks me how many of my Christian brethren are outright calling for and rooting for the utter destruction of Hamas. It is all over Facebook, for example.

My question to you misguided people is this: Since when are we Christians supposed to take a side in secular wars, much less root for the destruction of a particular side? I can assure you that you certainly won't find any such teaching in the New Testament. As I have stated before, our faith is supposed to be based on faith in Jesus Christ alone, and NOT on some secular, political or military agenda. After all, as I have clearly explained so many times before, our Kingdom is not of this present world. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul clearly writes, we are not supposed to engage ourselves in the affairs of this life any more than what is absolutely necessary. We are in fact supposed to remain God's "called out ones". That is to say, His "ekklesia". Here are a few verses for your consideration:

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

John 15:19, KJV

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the

world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

John 17:14-15, KJV

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

John 18:36, KJV

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:1-2, KJV

Now, for those legalists who may have been offended by some of my previous words, let me just say the following: Look, if you feel the need to keep the Sabbath, to eat only kosher foods, to observe Jewish feast days, to blow the shofar, to strive to keep the Mosaic Law, to take a Jewish name, to call God the Father and Jesus by certain Hebrew names, or whatever you like to do, then by all means do it if it makes you feel better about yourself. However, at the same time, instead of condemning those of us who do not see the need to do such things, please have the decency to respect our position as well. If you need help with doing that, then as I mentioned earlier, please read Romans 14 where the Apostle Paul talks about some of these same issues. In fact, before moving on, let me share the key verses from that chapter with you:

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him . . . One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. LET EVERY MAN BE FULLY PERSUADED IN HIS OWN MIND. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he

eateth not, and giveth God thanks . . . I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost . . . For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Romans 14:1-3, 5-6, 14-17, 20-23, 15:1-3, KJV

To continue, despite the important decisions which were made at the Jerusalem meeting in Acts chapter fifteen concerning the Gentile converts, there is sufficient evidence to prove that the clash between the Jewish legalists and the Jewish Christians endured for many decades. As we've already seen, the legalistic Jewish brethren really despised the Gentile converts, and wanted to place them in bondage to the harsh mandates of Mosaic Law, just like themselves. This included demanding that the Gentiles be circumcised. But on the other hand, the Jewish Christians believed that we are saved by God's Grace alone without the works of the Law. Furthermore, they embraced the Gentile converts as brethren.

Something else which is made perfectly clear in the Bible is the fact that the legalistic, Law-bound Jews were a constant thorn in the Apostle Paul's side. The Book of Acts informs us that some of them were such vicious, vile, wicked devils, that they would even follow Paul around from city to city, and purposely stir up trouble in whatever place he chose to preach. One of the final clashes between the Apostle Paul and these hateful legalists occurred in the temple itself in Jerusalem, and is found in the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Acts, as we read in the following group of verses:

"And when the seven days [of purification] were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him [Paul] in the temple [in Jerusalem], stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him."

Acts 21:27-36, KJV

In thinking about these evil, unbelieving Jews who constantly harassed the Apostle Paul wherever he went, and who did their utmost to prevent him from preaching the Gospel, I'm reminded of something which Paul wrote in the following verses which are found in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren. It is very interesting to note that the accusation which Paul makes against the Jews regarding "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved", is in fact the very same accusation that Jesus made against the Scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew chapter twenty-three. Was this just a mere coincidence? I think not. Consider the following set of verses:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! FOR YE SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

Matthew 23:13, KJV

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: FORBIDDING US TO SPEAK TO THE GENTILES THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."
1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, KJV

While the clash in the temple compound may have appeared to be a negative turn of events, let us not forget that in the very next chapter of the Book of Acts, Paul recited how the Lord had told him "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Furthermore, we are informed in Acts chapter twenty-three that the Lord stood by Paul and told him the following:

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."
Acts 23:11, KJV

As it turned out, the Apostle Paul was imprisoned for about two years, after which time he was given the opportunity at different times to witness to Ananias the high priest, to governor Felix, to governor Festus, to king Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice, and ultimately to Emperor Nero in Rome itself, exactly as the Lord had told him would occur. All of these events are described in considerable detail in the final five chapters of the Book of Acts, as well as in a few of the footnotes which appear at the end of several of the Epistles.

As we discussed earlier, despite the evidence I have provided in this series to prove otherwise, some of these modern-day Apostle Paul idolizers seem to believe that the Gospel which Paul preached was somehow different from the Gospel which was preached by Jesus and the Apostles in the Gospels, as well as in the Book of Acts. They argue that Paul preached the Gospel of Grace, while the Lord and the Apostles preached what the Scriptures refer to as the Gospel of the Kingdom. On three different occasions in two of his Epistles, Paul refers to the message he preached as "my gospel", as we can determine by the following three verses:

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus

Christ ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL."

Romans 2:16, KJV

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,"

Romans 16:25, KJV

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL:"

2 Timothy 2:8, KJV

So the question which arises is why the Apostle Paul would use that particular phraseology in his Epistles. Was it to show that the message he preached was different from what Jesus and the Apostles preached? My response would be "no", because Paul preached the same three-point Gospel as they did, as we discussed earlier in this series. Let me share those three points from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 with you one more time to refresh your memory:

1. Christ died for our sins
2. He was buried
3. He rose again the third day

For example, while in Athens, Luke describes the following interaction which the Apostle Paul had with the incredulous Epicurean and Stoick philosophers, some of whom found his discussion of the resurrection from the dead a bit hard to swallow:

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: BECAUSE HE PREACHED UNTO THEM JESUS, AND THE RESURRECTION. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? . . . AND WHEN THEY HEARD OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

Acts 17:18-19, 32, KJV

As you can plainly see, Paul preached Christ crucified and resurrected, exactly as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

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Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 5

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

Paul Preached A Three-Point Gospel, Why Did Paul Refer To It As "My Gospel"?, Paul's Rebuke To The Galatians, Allegory Of Abraham Sarah And Hagar, Jerusalem Was In Bondage With Her Children, Paul's Concern With The Spreading Legalism, Serious Problem With Circumcision, Two Thousand Years Of Legalism, A Major Disagreement Occurs Between Peter And Paul, A Gospel For Circumcision And Uncircumcision, Peter Supports The Gentiles, Peter Backtracks Due To Fear Of The Jewish Legalists, Apostle Paul Rebukes Peter To His Face For Being A Hypocrite, Reason Why Paul May Have Written "My Gospel", A Gospel Without All The Legalistic Baggage, The Gospel Of The Kingdom, Definition Of The Word "Gospel", Gospel Of The Grace Of God, Why Don't The Pauline Extremists Accept The Book Of Acts As A Part Of The Gospel To The Gentiles?, Gospel Of The Kingdom And Gospel Of Grace Are Actually Synonymous Terms, The Gospel Of Christ

As I concluded in part four, the Apostle Paul preached Christ crucified and resurrected, exactly as we see in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. It was a three-point Gospel which also included the fact that Jesus died for our sins. As we likewise learned in part four, on three different occasions Paul referred to his Gospel as "my gospel". I questioned why Paul would use that phrase. I responded that I do not believe that it was to show that the central message he preached was different from what Jesus and the Apostles preached, because the core message of all of their Gospels was exactly the same. I am not Paul, so I obviously cannot say with absolute certainty what was going on in his head. However, I do have a working theory which I would like to share with you for your consideration.

My suspicion -- and this is only my personal speculation -- is that given the strong evidence we see in the Book of Acts, as well as in Paul's Epistles, Paul was very concerned with the Jewish legalism which was overtaking the home Church in Jerusalem. This is also clearly in evidence in something he wrote to the Galatian brethren in the following verses. Don't forget that Paul strongly rebuked those brethren because they had in fact fallen back under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, just like the brethren in Jerusalem:

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain."

Galatians 3:1-4, KJV

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."

Galatians 4:21-25, KJV

So using the historical example of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, and Hagar and Ishmael, what Paul is describing here are two covenants or two testaments. As you will recall, we briefly discussed covenants and testaments earlier in this series. So Hagar and Ishmael obviously represent the old covenant which was based upon the Laws of Moses -- which equates to bondage -- because Hagar was a bondmaid, or slave. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Abraham, Sarah and Isaac obviously represent the new covenant which is based on God's Grace and faith -- and equates to freedom from the Law -- because Sarah was a free woman, and Isaac was born of faith, as Paul writes. In fact, perhaps you may recall that in the Gospel of John, we find two verses which mention this very thing. Consider this:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the

Father,) full of grace and truth . . . For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

John 1:14, 17, KJV

Thus we see the very first mention of Law versus Grace in the four Gospels. As Paul writes above, "Jerusalem . . . is in bondage with her children." So consider how Paul must be thinking as he goes about preaching the Gospel. He has seen what has been happening in Jerusalem, and now the Galatian brethren have succumbed to the very same problem: bondage to the Mosaic Law. They have backslidden from the freedom they had in Christ. It is not difficult to imagine that Paul was very concerned with this spiritual disease afflicting other Churches he is in the process of establishing.

You may recall that in part four of this series, I mentioned how the legalistic Jews in Jerusalem even wanted the Gentile converts to be circumcised. They had the audacity to go up to Antioch -- where Paul and Barnabas were located at that particular time -- where they then insisted that the Gentile brethren be circumcised. That is in fact why Paul traveled to Jerusalem in the first place. That is, to resolve their problem. In fact, two chapters earlier in his same Epistle to the Galatian brethren, Paul relates another incident that occurred while he was attending the meeting in Jerusalem. As it turns out, those same legalists wanted Titus -- who was Paul's Greek companion -- to be circumcised. However, Paul absolutely refused to allow it. Consider this set of verses:

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: TO WHOM WE GAVE PLACE BY SUBJECTION, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

Galatians 2:1-5, KJV

"And certain men which came down from Judaea [to Antioch] taught the brethren, and said, EXCEPT YE BE CIRCUMCISED AFTER THE MANNER OF MOSES, YE CANNOT BE SAVED. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had NO SMALL DISSENSION AND DISPUTATION WITH

THEM, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. BUT THERE ROSE UP CERTAIN OF THE SECT OF THE PHARISEES WHICH BELIEVED, SAYING, THAT IT WAS NEEDFUL TO CIRCUMCISE THEM, AND TO COMMAND THEM TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES."

Acts 15:1-5, KJV

Please notice that very similar to the Christian legalists we still have to deal with in our modern day, while they were Pharisees, nevertheless, these troublemakers in Acts 15 were likewise Believers in the doctrine of Christ. So the problem with legalism within the Church has endured for two thousand years. It divided the Church back then, and it still divides Christians today as well.

It was right after this that Peter, James and John handed down their decision, and wrote their letters to the Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, as we discussed in part four. Sadly, despite the aforementioned decisions being made with regards to the Gentile converts, and despite the fact that Peter himself stood up in defense of the Gentile brethren at that meeting, later on he had a terrible falling out with the Apostle Paul, when he traveled to Antioch to visit the Gentile brethren there.

You may recall that I mentioned in part three how the time eventually arrived when the audience to whom the Gospel message was being directed was divided into two. That is to say, between the Jews and the Gentiles, or the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. Paul likewise mentioned this fact in his Epistle to the Galatians, along with the falling out he had with the Apostle Peter. Sadly, the disagreement they had was so severe, that even Barnabas -- who had previously been Paul's travel companion -- was affected, and he eventually separated himself from Paul due to a disagreement regarding John Mark. Consider the following group of verses which confirm these various points:

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the

circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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 . . . But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Galatians 2:7-9, 11-14, KJV

If you are a little confused by what you just read, let me clarify it a bit for you. You may recall how in part three, we discussed how in Acts chapter eleven, the legalists in Jerusalem were quite offended when they learned that Peter had gone from Joppa to Caesarea in order to be a witness to Cornelius, who was a centurion with the Italian band. Not only did Peter eat and fellowship with them, but as a result of that journey, and Peter's powerful witness, Cornelius' entire family accepted the Lord and were baptized. You can read all about this in Acts chapter ten. However, despite that wonderful development, as I said, the legalists who were in Jerusalem became very offended. Let me share those two verses from Acts chapter eleven with you again:

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Acts 11:2-3, KJV

It is sometime after that, that the legalists then travel to Antioch where Paul and Barnabas are located, and attempt to pressure the Gentile brethren into being circumcised, which Paul simply would not allow. As we learned earlier, it was then that Paul, Barnabas and Titus traveled to Jerusalem in order to have their Gospel confirmed and validated by the Church Elders. While they were there, the legalists tried to force Titus to be circumcised. So the aforementioned meeting

occurred in Acts chapter fifteen where Peter stood up and defended the right of the Gentile converts to neither be circumcised, or be required to follow the Laws of Moses.

Are you following me so far? So it is sometime after that meeting in Jerusalem that Peter travels to Antioch in order to fellowship with the Gentile brethren. Peter seems to be having a good time, and even sits down and eats with them. But then, as Paul describes above in Galatians chapter two, trouble brews when certain brethren from Jerusalem, who had been sent by the Apostle James, arrive in Antioch. All of a sudden, Peter, who previously seemed to be having no problem whatsoever with fellowshiping with the Gentiles, "withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision", according to the Apostle Paul.

Wow! Do you see that? Supposedly "bold" Peter was afraid of the Jewish legalists who arrived from Jerusalem. He did not want them to see him eating and fellowshiping with those "nasty" Gentile brethren, so he separated himself from those Gentile converts. As I have shared before, fear of the Jews -- particularly the legalistic Jews -- was a very powerful force in those days. This becomes evident by verses such as the following:

"Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS."

John 7:11-13, KJV

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus."

John 19:38, KJV

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."

John 20:19, 26, KJV

So clearly, those Jews were a very nasty bunch. So that is what caused the strong disagreement between Peter and Paul. Paul writes that he rebuked Peter in front of all of the brethren and basically accused him of being a hypocrite. In the previous verses, Paul writes that he "withstood [Peter] to the face, because he was to be blamed." The truth is that Paul was absolutely right. Peter was in fact so afraid of what the brethren from Jerusalem thought of him eating with the Gentiles, that he compromised his personal convictions, yielded to political correctness, became a menpleaser, and acted like a hypocrite.

This brings us back to my personal speculation regarding why Paul may have used the phrase "my gospel" three times. Well, think about it. Jerusalem has already been poisoned with a spirit of legalism. The Galatian brethren have backslidden and likewise fallen under the bondage of the Laws of Moses again. The legalistic brethren from Jerusalem have tried to pressure the Gentiles in Antioch to be circumcised. Then the legalists also try to pressure Titus into being circumcised when he, Barnabas and Paul go to Jerusalem for the meeting. And, lastly, Peter and Paul have a major disagreement which also affects Barnabas. So Paul is having a pretty rough time with all of these things going on.

So as I said earlier, consider how Paul must be thinking as he goes about preaching the Gospel. The last thing he wants to see is for more of the Churches he is establishing, fall under that very same sickness of legalism. Thus, perhaps by using the phrase "my gospel", Paul is trying to project the message that while he is preaching the very same Gospel as Jesus and the Apostles, it is NOT loaded down with all the legalistic baggage which has plagued Jerusalem, and some of the other Churches as well. That is my theory for what it is worth. Paul is basically telling the Gentiles something like the following:

"Hey, look. I really want you to accept Jesus Christ just as we have. However, I am not going to weigh you down with a bunch of regulations and do's and don'ts as is occurring with the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem. We really preach the same Gospel, but my Gospel doesn't come with all of that heavy, legalistic baggage attached to it."

Earlier, I mentioned that the Pauline extremists refer to the Gospel that Paul preached as the Gospel of Grace. But in contrast, they say that Jesus and the Apostles preached the

Gospel of the Kingdom or the Kingdom Gospel. So exactly what is meant by the Gospel of the Kingdom? Well, if we take an honest look at some of the things which Jesus said in the four Gospels, it appears that it is basically the same thing as what we read in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Consider this group of verses, all of which were either spoken by Jesus, or else which describe what He did:

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

Matthew 4:23, KJV

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

Matthew 9:35, KJV

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Matthew 24:14, KJV

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Mark 1:14-15, KJV

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Mark 8:31, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:46-47, KJV

So exactly what does the word "Gospel" mean. Derived from the Koine Greek word "euaggelion", the word "Gospel" simply means "glad tidings". "The glad tidings of what exactly?" you may ask. Well, in reality, it is actually a few different things.

It is the glad tidings -- or good news -- that the Kingdom of God would soon be set up as per Jesus' own words. It is also the glad tidings that because Jesus shed His precious Blood on a Roman cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins by the Grace of God through faith in Jesus' Sacrifice. Lastly, it is the glad tidings that because Jesus died, was buried, and then rose from the dead, we too can be resurrected to new life through faith in His name. So the Gospel is all of these things. That is what the previous verses tell me. It is also what 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 tells me as well.

While the Apostle Paul three times referred to the Gospel as "my gospel" in two of his Epistles, in the Book of Acts, we learn that he also referred to it as "the gospel of the grace of God". What we also see is that the Apostle Paul constantly preached the Kingdom of God. Consider the following verses:

"And when they [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Acts 14:21-22, KJV

"And he [Paul] went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Acts 19:8, KJV

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, shall see my face no more."

Acts 20:24-25, KJV

"And when they had appointed him [Paul] a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified THE KINGDOM OF GOD, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening . . . And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

Acts 28:23, 30-31, KJV

As you can plainly see, while on one occasion the Apostle Paul referred to the message he preached as "the gospel of the grace of God", it is also quite evident from the above verses that he also preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. How can this be? Don't those Apostle Paul extremists claim that Paul preached the Gospel of Grace and NOT the Gospel of the Kingdom? Yes, they do. However, that is NOT what the previous verses say. Paul clearly tells us that he went around preaching the Kingdom of God. Therefore, those folks are obviously wrong.

In fact, I find it rather interesting that these Pauline extremists claim that our Gospel -- that is to say, the Gospel of the Gentiles -- is only from the Epistle to the Romans to the Epistle to Philemon. As I mentioned near the beginning of this series, the Pauline extremists make this claim repeatedly. According to them, anything outside of those Books is NOT our Gospel. Let me ask you something. Considering that we clearly see the Apostle Paul engaged in a lot of action in the Book of Acts, traveling to different places, preaching the Gospel everywhere, getting into a few arguments, getting into trouble with the legalistic Jews and other local authorities, winning converts and establishing Churches, etc., don't you find it strange that the Pauline extremists don't include the Book of Acts as a part of the Gospel to the Gentiles? I mean, beginning with Acts chapter eight, Paul is literally everywhere!

So why do the Pauline extremists refuse to accept the Book of Acts as a part of the Gospel to the Gentiles? I believe I have already given you the answer. As I have said all along, they are purposely trying to separate the Gospel of Grace -- which they claim only Paul preached -- from the Gospel of the Kingdom -- which they claim only Jesus and the Apostles preached in the Gospels. However, as I already stated, in the Book of Acts, we clearly see Paul preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and THAT is what these extremists apparently do not want people to know, because it messes up their neat, little, false doctrine.

My dear friends, it should be obvious to you by now that in reality, the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace are synonymous terms, because the Gospel of the Kingdom IS the Gospel of Grace, and the Gospel of Grace IS the Gospel of the Kingdom. When Jesus went preaching the Gospel of the

Kingdom, He was also preaching the Gospel of Grace, because He already knew what He had to do in order for His listeners to enter into that coming Kingdom. As we saw earlier in this series, the Lord spoke to His followers of His coming Death and Resurrection multiple times. Likewise, He explained to them the necessity of His blood atonement, so that sins can be forgiven, and the way can be opened for us to enter the Kingdom of God.

In short, these two terms are NOT really mutually exclusive. To reiterate, it is in fact because of the Gospel of Grace that we can enter the Kingdom of God. If Jesus had not died on the Cross -- the Gospel of Grace -- then we could not enter the Kingdom of God -- the Gospel of the Kingdom. So in my view, preaching one, is the same as preaching the other.

Now, if that is not enough for you already, consider the fact that in his Epistles, the Apostle Paul likewise refers to the Gospel he preached as the "gospel of Christ", as we can easily determine by the following group of verses. By the way, these verses cover many different subjects, and they are not complete thoughts, because I did not include the surrounding verses. Don't let that bother you. The main thing I want you to see is how many times the Apostle Paul actually used the phrase "gospel of Christ":

"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."

Romans 1:16, KJV

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ . . . And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

Romans 15:8-9, 29, KJV

"If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ . . . What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."

1 Corinthians 9:12, 18, KJV

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, KJV

"Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;"

2 Corinthians 9:13, KJV

"For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:"

2 Corinthians 10:14, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:"

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, KJV

Please go to part six for the conclusion of this series.

Written by Bill Kochman

Beware of the Pauline Extremists! - Part 6

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Published On : December 25, 2023

Last Updated : December 25, 2023

Apostle Paul Referred To The Gospel He Preached In Different Ways, Gospel Of God, Gospel Of The Circumcision And Gospel Of The Uncircumcision, Peter And Paul Both Preached A Gospel Of Grace, The Glorious Gospel Of The Blessed God, The Gospel Is Named Ten Different Ways In The New Testament, There Is Only One Gospel Regardless Of What We Choose To Call It, Confusing Divisive Jargon Of Modern Christianity, So Many Denominations And Doctrines, The Divided Body Of Christ, Pauline Extremists Damage Divide And Weaken The Body Of Christ, My Admiration For Apostle Paul And His Epistles, Pauline Extremists Can Confuse Young Christians, Two Opposite Ends Of The Same Spectrum, Paul Was Strongly Opposed To Man Worship And Cultish Followings, My Closing Remarks, Bill's Bible Basics Suggested Reading List

As I concluded in part five, we have seen that the Apostle Paul referred to the Gospel he preached in a variety of ways. He referred to it as the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and the Gospel of Christ. Hoping not to weary you, we are not finished talking about this subject quite yet. It might interest you to know that the Apostle Paul likewise referred to the Gospel he shared regularly as "the gospel of God". Here again are a group of verses which confirm this point. As with the last group of verses, please don't be confused by the fact that none of these verses are related to each other and have no common theme. Again, the reason I am sharing them with you is to simply show you how many times the Apostle Paul used the phrase "gospel of God":

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,"
Romans 1:1, KJV

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

Romans 15:15-16, KJV

"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?"

2 Corinthians 11:5-7, KJV

"For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention . . . But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

1 Thessalonians 2:1-2, 7-9, KJV

Last of all, we have this final verse which was written by the Apostle Peter, where he likewise uses the phrase "the gospel of God" in his first Epistle:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

1 Peter 4:17, KJV

As we learned in part four, let me also remind you that when writing to the Galatian brethren, in order to differentiate between Peter's ministry to the Jews, and his own ministry to the Gentiles, Paul referred to his Gospel as "the gospel of the uncircumcision"; NOT because his message was different in content from what Peter preached, but simply because he and Peter were ministering to different ethnic groups of people.

That is all. Please remember that at that Jerusalem meeting, Peter said "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Stated more clearly, Peter and Paul BOTH preached the Gospel of Grace. Consider the following two verses:

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)"
Galatians 2:7-8, KJV

Finally, in Paul's first Epistle to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy, in one instance, Paul refers to his Gospel as "the glorious gospel of the blessed God", as we see by this verse:

"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."
1 Timothy 1:11, KJV

By this time, I imagine that your mind is probably boggled a bit after reading through so many Bible verses in a row. However, there is a point to my madness. Stop and consider now how many different ways the Gospel is mentioned in the previous groups of verses. They include the following:

1. my gospel
2. the gospel
3. the gospel of Christ
4. the gospel of God
5. the glorious gospel of the blessed God
6. the gospel of the circumcision
7. the gospel of the grace of God
8. the gospel of the kingdom
9. the gospel of the kingdom of God
10. the gospel of the uncircumcision

Of those ten phrases, nine of them were used by the Apostle Paul in different places in the Scriptures. Now, let me ask you a really simple question. Do you think that each of those phrases means something different? For example, do you really think that the Apostle Paul was referring to nine different Gospels when he wrote the previous verses? Yes, I'm being rhetorical, because, personally, I already know what the answer is.

I am sure you realize that just because Paul referred to the Gospel in nine different ways does NOT mean that there are nine different Gospels. Such a thought would be ludicrous. As I have already made rather clear throughout this long series, regardless of what we choose to call it, there is really only ONE Gospel, and that is the Gospel which announces the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the gateway to the Kingdom of God for those who believe. Period. That is the glad tidings, the good news, the gospel, the "euaggelion".

If you are more or less familiar with my work, then you may know that one of my pet peeves is the way modern theologians, Bible teachers and preachers have invented so many different terms to describe and define our body of Christian beliefs. I mean, it is really mind-boggling, and quite frankly, really confusing. When I was a young Christian over fifty year ago, we didn't have all of this modern, confusing jargon. Yes, we had denominations -- which is a whole different subject -- but we were all just Christians.

Today, however, in the world of contemporary Christianity, it seems that one cannot just be a Christian, and nothing else. Rather, he has to be a Christian with a string of adjectives after the actual word "Christian", as well as a prefix before the word "Christian", which is usually whatever denomination that person happens to belong to. For example, a person might refer to himself as a Baptist Christian, Methodist Christian, Pentecostal Christian, or whatever their particular flavor of Christianity happens to be. And then they will add a string of adjectives after the word "Christian" which describes the particular doctrinal positions they embrace. I mean, it is really ridiculous.

Tragically, our faith is now so divided by so many different denominations, each of which has their own set of conflicting doctrines, that I can almost understand why some people feel the need to add a string of adjectives after the actual word "Christian". But, do you know what? I am now a septuagenarian who has studied the Bible for over fifty years, and to tell you the truth, I honestly do not know what most of those descriptive words they use even mean. Furthermore, I really don't care either.

Quite frankly, I find all of that theological jargon not only divisive, but as I already said, confusing as well. It certainly does not contribute towards the overall unity of

the Body of Christ, does it? Instead of uniting us as the Apostle Paul hoped for, using such descriptive labels in fact divides us. It gives us reasons and excuses to explain why we can't get along. Let me share with you those verses from the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians one more time, as well as some of his thoughts from his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth. This time I am going to place some of the words in uppercase letters for emphasis:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, THAT YE ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, AND THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; but THAT YE BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER in the SAME MIND and in the SAME JUDGMENT."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom ALL THE BUILDING FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are BUILDED TOGETHER for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Ephesians 2:19-22, KJV

Clearly, today we are NOT "perfectly joined together", or a building "fitly framed together". Sadly, we are in fact more divided than ever before due to our diversity of conflicting doctrines and divisive labels. To continue, this is exactly the same problem I have with these Pauline extremists who divide the Gospel into two different parts, one for the Jews in the Gospels, and the other one for the Gentiles in Paul's Epistles. "We should read and adhere to this, while they need to read and adhere to that" seems to be their mantra. Some of these Pauline extremists are setting up barriers and causing division. They are NOT contributing to the unity of the Body of Christ. They are in fact DAMAGING and WEAKENING the Body of Christ through their divisive beliefs.

Now, don't get me wrong. As I said at the beginning of this series, I wholeheartedly agree with 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. As I also said, I have great admiration for the Apostle Paul. I really love reading and studying his amazing body of work. Paul and his writings are definitely NOT the problem. These Pauline extremists who misuse Paul's writings are the real problem. As I have already stated multiple times, there is only ONE Gospel which is signed and sealed with the Blood of Jesus Christ. Either we accept it, or else we reject it, no

matter what our ethnic origin is, Jew or Gentile.

So to reiterate one of my key points, this belief in there being two different Gospels is a dangerous doctrine because it conveys a very confusing message to young Believers in Christ. I mean, we really need to think about this. If we accept this belief that Paul is our only Apostle, and that what he preached is our only Gospel, some people -- meaning young Christians -- might be given the mistaken idea that we should simply ignore everything that what said by Jesus in the four Gospels. Now tell me; do you believe that? I most certainly don't!

I mean, gosh, if we accept that misguided view, then forget such well-known, soul-saving verses as John 1:12, John 3:16 and John 14:6. Just throw them in the trash bin. After all, that is not our Gospel. Sorry Jesus, but we've got the words of the Apostle Paul now. He is our Apostle, so You will have to be happy with taking second place from here on out, Lord. Now doesn't that sound just horrible? Those verses apply to everyone, regardless of whether he is a Jew or a Gentile. So to say it one more time, this line of thinking only causes division and drives a huge wedge between the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. It breaks the harmony of the Scriptures.

So in conclusion, just as the Apostle Paul haters have gone completely to one extreme of the spectrum and accused Paul of being a devil and a false apostle who did not uphold the Law, and who encouraged others to likewise not observe the commandments either, at the same time, these Apostle Paul idolizers have gone completely to the opposite end of the spectrum, and have set Paul up on a very high pedestal. In so doing, not only are they sowing division in the Body of Christ, but in my view, it makes them guilty of man worship as well.

What is interesting about this is the fact that Paul was very much aware of what was going on. He was very concerned about it, and he did not like it one bit. He was very much opposed to such cultish followings and what basically amounted to man worship. It is for that very reason that he chided the people in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and he warned them against idolizing him, or any other person who preached the Gospel, as we see by the following group of verses:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by

them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

1 Corinthians 1:11-13, KJV

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase . . . Therefore let no man glory in men . . ."

1 Corinthians 3:3-7, 21, KJV

"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

So, as I said, I hold great admiration for the Apostle Paul and his accomplishments. I greatly enjoy reading and studying his Epistles. But it is a serious mistake to place him, or his words above or before the words of the Lord, as found in the four Gospels. As we have seen, what Paul taught, Jesus likewise taught, as did the Apostles. It is all one and the very same Gospel, and it is meant for all people everywhere. Let's please leave it at that.

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. It is my hope that you have found it to be both informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the

list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which contain topics that are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server.

All Are Given a Chance, But . . .
Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?
Are the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?
Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts
Did the Apostle Paul Start the Christian Faith?
Fifty Days Which Changed the World
Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace
Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?
The Blood Atonement: In Jesus' Own Words
What Does 'The Truth Shall Make You Free' Really Mean?

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