

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

The Importance of Paul's Apostolic Authority

Galatians 1:11-24

1. **The Authority of Paul's Message** (vs.11-12)

Attacks upon the apostle Paul's authority have been a consistent front upon which the enemy has assaulted the church of the Jesus Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18). Paul had to regularly defend the legitimacy of both his apostolic ministry and his message from attacks from within the Christian community (cf. 2 Cor. 12:1-6).

2. **The Authenticity of Paul's Opposition** (vs.13-14)

Paul's path to apostleship and ministry for Christ was soaked in the blood of the Christian martyrs who he assisted in putting to death (Acts 8-9). Paul does not embellish the gory details in the retelling of his life before Christ, but he does state the facts in order to establish the truthfulness of his testimony about both his message and his ministry (Phil. 3:4-6).

3. **The Astonishment of Paul's Conversion** (vs.15-20)

Paul's enthusiasm for persecuting the church was renowned, and he was greatly feared after Steven was martyred (Acts 9:13-14; Gal. 1:23). Immediately following Paul's conversion and baptism, he began to preach that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 9:19-24) to the astonishment of other Christians (cf. vs.23-24).

4. **The Arena of Paul's Discipleship** (vs.16b-18a)

While Paul began to preach Jesus immediately upon his conversion, three years elapsed between his conversion and the first time he met any of the apostles from Jerusalem. It was during those initial years that Paul, in some way, was being taught the Lord Himself (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3). Though there doubtlessly were other believers who ministered with Paul and aided him in his understanding, his instruction was directly from Christ, and not the other apostles.

5. **The Ascribing of Praise of God** (vs.21-24)

As Paul shares his testimony with the Galatian Christians, he ensures that God is the one who is glorified (v.24). Ascribing glory to God and to Him alone is the theme of Paul's life and ministry. Glorifying God as the only one worthy of all praise for his own salvation and ministry is directly related to the chastising message that he is about to unfold to the Galatians (Gal. 2:1ff; 5:4).