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The Acid Test Of Life Is Time

Gal. 1:18-24

Paul the apostle was forever being followed by the Judaizers in attempt to make proselytes of the gentiles Paul had won to Christ.

1. He calls them men pleasers. 1:10a-b
2. He calls them false brethren. 2: 4a
3. He calls them opportunists. 4:17
4. He calls them leaven and hinderers of the faith. 5:7, 9
6. He calls them boasters in and of the flesh. 6:13

Paul pens his own autobiographical section in the first two chapters in order to establish beyond any shadow of a doubt the genuineness of his gospel and his apostleship, being independent of man and dependent On God alone.

1. The independence of his gospel is recored first. 1:11-14
2. The Independence of his apostleship is recorded next. 1:15-17

Then Paul records that time bore witness of his gospel and apostleship, as both being independent of man, being acknowledged in three regions. 1:18-24

- I. Paul's apostleship was acknowledged in Damascus. vs. 18a
- II. Paul's apostleship was acknowledged in Jerusalem. vs. 18-20
- III. Paul's apostleship was acknowledged in Judea. vs. 21-24

I. Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Damascus. vs. 18a

A. By Paul preaching during three years in Damascus. vs. 18a

* These three years look back to the Arabia and Damascus, in the previous verse, for the few details we have to go to Acts. Acts 9:20-22

1. He immediately preached to the Jews the Christ in the synagogues. vs. 20a
 - a. The word preached "kerusso" means to herald, to proclaim, sixty-one times in the New Testament.
 - b. A herald was one who was sent by one to proclaim, usually a king.
 - c. He was given the message, the authority and responsibility to fulfill the proclamation.
 - 1) Jesus had revealed the gospel directly to Paul on the Damascus road, no man taught it to him. Gal. 1:11-12

- 2) God had revealed His Son in Paul, that he might preach Jesus among the Gentiles and he did not immediately confer with flesh and blood. Gal. 1:16
2. He proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God. vs. 20b
- a. This implied that God had taken on a human body. Jn. 1:1, 14
 - b. This was the very reason the Jews crucified Jesus because he made Himself out to be the Son of God, Matt. 26:63-66
3. He amazed those in Damascus for they knew who he was. vs. 21
- a. Paul had once destroyed Christians who called on the name of Jesus in Jerusalem. vs. 21c, Gal. 1:13
 - b. Paul in fact had come to Damascus to bind them and return them to the chief priests in Jerusalem. vs. 21d-e
4. He confounded the Jews at Damascus by proving that this Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. vs. 22
- B.** By Paul's persecution by the Jews who plotted to kill him. Acts 9:23-24
1. The phrase "after many days" being passed refers to the end of the three year period. vs. 23

2. The plot to kill Paul was persistent as they watched the gates "day and night". vs. 24
 3. They no longer saw Paul as a Pharisee, the number one enemy of the Christians.
 4. They saw him as a traitor to the Jews.
- C.** By Paul's escape from Damascus as the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. Acts 9:25, 2 Cor. 11:32-33
1. Both accounts attest to Damascus being the place.
 2. Both accounts attest it was Saul.
 3. Both accounts attest to being aided.
 4. Luke in Acts places the emphasis on the Jews behind the plot.
 5. Paul in Corinthians places the emphasis on the authority of Aretas the king, as the instrument to accomplish it.
 - * This was his first visit to Jerusalem since his conversion three years previous! Gal. 1:17

Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Damascus for three years!

II. Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Jerusalem. 1:18-20

A. By Peter who was the leading apostle. vs. 18

1. Peter was the apostle who Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom as he confessed Him to the Son of God and later restored him to shepherd his sheep. Matt. 16:16. 19. Jn. 21:15-17
 - a. His name appears first in all the lists recorded.
 - b. His proclamation at Pentecost gave him credibility.
 - c. His name is prominent in the first 12 chapters of Acts until Paul enters the picture.
 - d. His name means rock in Greek as Cephas in Aramaic.
 - e. He was one of the pillars of the church. Gal. 2:9
2. Paul was the apostle who Jesus had chosen as a chosen vessel to bear His name before the Gentiles and he children of Israel. Acts 9:15
 - a. Paul attempted to join himself to the disciples at Jerusalem but they were afraid, not believing he was a disciple at all. Acts 9:26
 - b. Paul was brought to the apostles by Barnabas who gave testimony of his conversion and commission. Acts 9:27
 - 1) How he had seen the Lord on the road.
 - 2) How Jesus had spoken to Paul.

- 3) How Paul had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus
3. Paul was preaching at Jerusalem with them. Acts 9:28
 - a. There is no contradiction between Acts and Galatians for Paul is focusing on people who acknowledged his apostleship, where Luke in Acts focuses on the historical details.
 - b. Paul went to Jerusalem to see “historesai” Peter, we get our word history from it.
 - 1) The visit had the purpose of knowing and inquiring of each other.
 - 2) The visit without doubt had the purpose of inquiring about their life history in Christ.
 - 3) The entire account implies an equal standing in apostleship!
- B. By James who was the leading authority of the church in Jerusalem. vs. 19
 - * He was the recognized authority in the First church council. Acts 15:13
 - 1. Paul calls James an apostle in the general sense, not one of the twelve.
 - a. Paul tells us that James saw Jesus after his resurrection. I Cor. 15:7

- b. Peter after his release from jail by the angel sent a message to tell James.
Acts 12:17
- c. James met Paul on his return to Jerusalem after this third missionary journey. Acts 21:18
- 2. Paul calls James the Lord's brother.
 - a. The gospels list James as the first of four brothers of Jesus, the oldest.
Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3
 - b. The brother of Jesus along with the rest of his brothers and sisters did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
Mk. 3:21, Jn. 7:3-5
 - c. Luke tells us Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers were in the upper room praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:14
 - d. The Scripture give witness by the Holy Spirit to Mary's normal family life after the birth of Jesus, which involved sexual intercourse and the birth of children. (Refuting the doctrine of Rome that Mary was a perpetual virgin.)
- C. By the Hellenist who attempted to kill Paul.
Acts 9:29
 - 1. Because he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.

- 2. Because he disputed against the Hellenist which means to question, reason and examine together.
- 3. Their conclusion due to their disputing was that they would kill him.
- 4. The entire record of all Paul declared, is qualified as being said before God and true. vs. 20
* Rom. 9:1, 2 Cor. 1:23, 11:31, 1 Thes. 2:5

Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Jerusalem for fifteen days!

III. Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Judea. vs. 21-24

- * The time is approximate, commentators vary between seven to ten years.
- A. From the time Paul left Jerusalem to go to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. vs. 21
* Both constituted a Roman province, Syria having the greater importance in the gospel work. Acts 11:25-26, 15:41
 - 1. Paul's visit was terminated by the plot of the Jews to kill him. Acts 9:29
 - 2. The brethren in Jerusalem brought Paul down to Caesarea and out to Tarsus. Acts 9:30
 - a. Tarsus was Paul's home city. Acts 23:3.

- b. Barnabas went to seek Paul at Tarsus to begin the work at Antioch about nine years after he left Jerusalem.
Acts 11:25
 - 2. Paul told the Hebrew crowd from the steps of the Antonio fortress of his vision of Jesus in the temple and how Jesus sent him away to the Gentiles because the Jews would not receive his testimony.
Acts 22:17-21
- B.** From the reports the churches in Judea were constantly hearing. vs. 22-23
- 1. Paul had no personal encounter with the churches in Judea. vs. 22
 - * They did not even know what he looked like!
 - 2. Paul kept being the topic of their hearing. vs. 23
 - a. What they were hearing constant and consistent.
 - b. What they were hearing was that he who formerly persecuted the Christians now preached the faith which once he tried to destroy.
 - * A genuine heart and life transformation that proved to be genuine by the test of time!

- C.** From the evidence that the churches of Judea were glorifying God for the work through Paul. vs. 24
* Acts 9:31, 26:19-20
- 1. That quality of work through men by God which man neither claims credit, isn't given to Him nor receives it.
 - 2. Let your light so shine...glorify your...
Matt. 5:16

Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged in Judea for seven to nine years!

IV. Paul's indispensable lessons for us.

- A.** As Paul's apostleship was acknowledged for three years in Damascus, his new birth before the world, so each of us should be able to have our Christianity acknowledged as genuine before our world.
- 1. Do we proclaim Jesus when God opens doors?
 - 2. Does my life bear witness to the hostility against the gospel?
 - 3. Do I get easily discouraged when I am opposed?
 - * You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Matt. 5:13-14
- B.** As Paul's apostleship was acknowledged for fifteen days in Jerusalem, both his

genuineness and his spiritual maturity by Peter and James, could you be acknowledged by one or two godly persons as genuine and mature spiritually if you spend fifteen days with them?

1. By your conversation, seasoned with grace and salt. Col. 4:6
2. By your attitude, Christ-like. Phil. 2:3-4
3. By your zealousness for Christ. Tit. 3:8
4. By your passion for the lost. Jude 22

C. As Paul's apostleship was acknowledged for seven to ten years by the Judea region, can the Christian community that knows me acknowledge my Christianity as having stood the test of time?

1. To be faithful in the day of small things, regardless if I am seen or not, faithfulness. I Cor. 4:2
2. To be constantly hearing of God using me to share the faith. Acts 1:8
3. To be a witness to glorify God and not the vessel. I Cor. 1:26-31

Illustration

A lady once asked John Wesley that suppose he were to know that he would die at 12:00 midnight tomorrow, how would he spend the intervening time. His reply: "Why madam, just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening at Gloucester and again at five tomorrow morning;

after that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I would then go to Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, talk and pray with the family as usual, return to my room at 10 o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly father, lie down to rest, and wake up to glory." #1500

Paul's indispensable lessons for us are the acid test of time!

Conclusion

Paul's independent apostleship was acknowledged:

- I. In Damascus for three years!
- II. In Jerusalem for fifteen days!
- III. In Judea for seven to ten years!