

Paul's Independent Apostleship

Dr. Michael A. Cox

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Text: Galatians 1:18-24

Galatians: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: How Paul Became an Apostle

Central Idea of Message: Paul's apostleship was completely independent of the other apostles.

Introduction: The Judaizers in the region of Galatia, and elsewhere, were not only attacking Paul's gospel and its authenticity, but also attacking Paul's apostleship and its authenticity.

In this paragraph, Paul very capably defends his independence as an apostle of Jesus Christ by reviewing his trip to Jerusalem to visit with Peter and James, and then by explaining his whereabouts thereafter, which happened to be doing ministry in regions far from the work of the other apostles.

I. Paul's Visit to Jerusalem (vv. 18-20)

A. Paul finally meets Peter (v. 18)

1. Three years after his conversion
 - a) After spending three years maturing in Christ and restudying the Old Testament, now studying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul met Peter
 - b) Paul was independent of outside influence, although others would later confirm what he had learned from Jesus
2. He went to meet with Cephas
 - a) **Cephas is Peter's Aramaic name, which means "rock"**
 - b) Paul stayed with Peter for fifteen days and got to know him well
 - (1) A longer visit may have been cut short
 - (a) By pressure from antagonistic Jews (Acts 9:26-30)
 - (b) By a vision from the Lord telling him to move on because his ministry in Jerusalem would not be received by the Jews there (Acts 22:17-18)

- (c) God sometimes moves his servants when their ministry is not received and implemented
- (2) Paul visited Peter as an equal, not as a subordinate

B. **Paul finally meets James (v. 19)**

- 1. He saw no other apostles except Peter and James
- 2. **This James is a half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), was regarded as the leader of the "mother church" in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13), and was the writer of the Book of James**
 - a) James is best understood as a son of Joseph and Mary, making him a half-brother of Jesus
 - (1) This is called "The Helvidian Theory"
 - (2) Named after one Helvidius, a layman of Rome, who wrote a book against mariolatry and ascetic celibacy around A.D. 380 (cf. Vincent 91)
 - b) James was converted after Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7)
 - c) James was not one of the original twelve apostles but, like Paul, came to be regarded as an apostle

C. **Paul is no liar (v. 20)**

- 1. Undoubtedly, there were those trying to discredit him
- 2. This verse stands as a sort of oath
- 3. **It is unfortunate that Paul had to defend not only his apostleship, but also his integrity as a teller of truth**
- 4. **The believability of Paul's words is undeniable, except to critics who simply refused to hear and love him**

II. **Paul's Visit to the Regions of Syria and Cilicia (vv. 21-24)**

A. **Paul went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia after meeting with Cephas and James (v. 21)**

- 1. Syria (cf. Colson 25)
 - a) North of Palestine
 - b) Antioch of Syria was the third largest city in the Roman Empire
- 2. Cilicia (cf. Colson 25)
 - a) Paul's home province
 - b) Cilicia's capital was the university city of Tarsus

3. Some estimate that about ten years of Paul's life are passed over here in silence (cf. Wuest 54)

B. **Paul was still not recognized by the Christians in Judea (v. 22)**

1. They had heard about him
2. They had not seen him because he had been in the Arabian desert

C. **Paul's dramatic conversion was becoming well-known (v. 23)**

1. Christians were hearing that the persecutor had become a preacher, that the wolf became a shepherd
2. Believers were hearing that he who had been such an enemy of the faith had now embraced it so completely that he was committed to spreading it throughout the world

D. **Paul's conversion prompted Christians to glorify God (v. 24)**

1. This must have bolstered their faith
2. **Transformations like this demonstrate the power of the gospel**
3. He who had probably made children into orphans and turned wives into widows was now working feverishly to be an instrument of redemption

Conclusion: Illustration. **If conversion to Christ can change the worst man in the world into the best, what can conversion do for you?**