THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"Paul, Servant of Christ, His Present"

Galatians 1:15-24

Introduction

1. A man's message is really only what his life is able to support. If Paul's life were a fraud, then his message would be also.

2. The present texts are examples of the earnest manner in which Paul defended his message of grace to the Galatians. If one were to seek for a personal testimony of his salvation in a short compass--here it is.

3. This personal witness gives evidence of the grace of God in a manifold manner. See it for yourself in these facts:

1. He was SEPARATED. v. 15.

   This separation is dependent upon the good pleasure of God (it pleased HIM). The aorist tense of the verb connotes its once for all action! It all had to be by grace for it came before he had any principles of his own--in his mother's womb! Cf. Jer. 1:5.

   The verb here is the one from which the noun Pharisee is taken. It is very likely that Paul was conveying a subtle comparison.

2. He was CALLED. v. 15.

   The verb here is in the aorist. It shows forth the point of action inherent in this tense. Since the call came from God, it is obvious that it is a matter of grace. But His call was effectual, thus teaching us that God moves upon those who are called to respond. This call is also a matter of His good pleasure!

3. He was EXPOSED. v. 16

   Paul was exposed to a revelation from God. From His blindness, God sent the light of His holy Son flooding into his soul (2 Cor. 4:3, 4). This revelation must come if one is to truly be born again.

Oh, to see Jesus in reality! The tense again is aroist!

4. He was COMMISSIONED. v. 16.
   Here is a blessed truth. The purpose for the preceding actions of God for Paul were to the end that he might evangelize with the good news. Paul's ministry in Galatia, therefore, was in view of God's work in Paul!

5. He was PREPARED. vv. 17-20.
   To support his contention that all he has was thru grace, Paul points out that he spent three years in Arabia after his conversion to Christ. He made other trips to Damascus (cf. 2 Cor. 11:32ff.) and Jerusalem, but these were minor in comparison with Arabia. The theological education of Paul came out of the wilderness!

SPECIAL NOTE: "Jame's the Lord's brother" has caused the Romans no end of confusion. Their Hieronymian theory suggests "brother" means "cousin." Their Epiphanian theory suggests James is a brother by a former marriage of Joseph. The true view is the Helvidian which avoids all circumlocutions and takes the words in their natural sense.

6. He was CONFIRMED. vv. 21-24.
   The key verse here is v. 24. The very area from which the Judaizers had come actually supplied support for Paul's ministry. If they accepted him how could the Galatians reject him? The imperfect tense of the Greek shows continual glorifying. Also points up that their glory was IN Paul and not because of Him.

Conclusion. What does all that Paul has written about himself prove? Just this: the gospel of grace without any additions is the one true and only Gospel of Christ. Have you believed it?