THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"What? A Servant of God"

Galatians 1:10-14

UPDATE

1. To support his firm stance on the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, the Apostle Paul defends his apostleship as through Jesus Christ and God the Father (v. 1). He was not alone with this message (v. 2).
2. The kernel of his grace message relates to the death of Christ, the deliverance of believers, and the determination of God the Father (His will). All of this is in v. 4 and results in God's glory (v. 5).
3. In view of the above, it is categorically affirmed that there is no other Gospel (vv. 6-10). Regretfully, there were some then (and now also!) who trouble and pervert people about the Gospel of God's grace. To add or subtract from the Gospel which saves (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-10) is to expose oneself to the disfavor of God (vv. 8, 9).
4. Paul by inspiration, extrapolates on his own life to firm up his persuasion about the grace of God's salvation. He does this by reference to four areas in his past life. Here they are:

1. Paul's MOTIVATION for the Gospel v. 10

a. A question

The "now is the same as in v. 9. No matter what the past may raise, the fact is what is happening "now"? The verbs "persuade" and "please" are significant. The former relates to bringing about a change of mind by the influence of reason or perhaps some moral concerns. The latter relates to giving pleasure, hence to be agreeable and not cause friction. The obvious answer is, "Not to please men, but to please God." In other words, Paul's veracity would not allow him to conciliate men and disregard God!

b. A contention

The second class condition in the second portion of the verse assumes the thought to be unreal. To please men is put into contrast with being a servant of Christ. Not even at this point would Paul concede his allegiance to men over God!

c. A conviction

It was a matter of fact with Paul. Popularity and servanthood to Christ are utterly incompatible. One cannot be a servant to men and a servant to Christ. He had made his choice.

Note: Reread this verse. Contrast "persuade" and "please;" "men" and "God;" "please men" and "servant of Christ." These are huge issues. Take them to heart!

2. Paul's RECEPTION of the Gospel vv. 11, 12

The verb "certify" is the causative form meaning "to make known." Notice that Paul refers to the Galatians as "brethren," hence as believers. It was important for them to know the source of the contents of Paul's preaching (i.e. the Gospel of God's grace).

a. Negatively

l) It was not according to man's standards. There was no human strain to the Gospel. It was not of man's device or idea.

2) It was not from the side of men. The Gospel was entirely outside of the province of men. It was beside them. The preposition used here shows there was no immediate connection with men. No involvement of men whatsoever!

3) It was not subjectively from men. This thought is expressed by the passive verb "taught." Paul did not learn it as a pupil from men.

b. Positively

The incredible negative three statements above are balanced (?!) by one affirmation. Everything Paul preached ("by me" v. 11) was through (so Greek) the revelation of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:1-12). In a real sense, these two verses (11, 12) state that the grace Gospel was not horizontal but vertical. It is still that way (cf. John 16:7-11).

3. Paul's CONVERSATION before the Gospel v. 13

It is important to grab that Paul is not telling a story, but he is relating historical proof. Such is the meaning of the aorist verb "ye heard." The noun "conversation" means "manner of life." It is used here and the next verse in relation to Judaism. His manner of life is characterized thus:-

1) Persecution of Church of God. The imperfect tense of the verb points to his relentless efforts (cf. Acts 8:1-3; 9:1, 2). "Beyond measure" shows his super abundant antagonism.

2) Wasting of Church of God. Again the imperfect tense demonstrates Paul's unrelenting effort to do away with the Church (cf. Acts 22:4). Thank God, the imperfect tense also shows Paul never succeeded in his scheme.

Note: These facts are advanced to show what a dramatic change took place in Paul's life when God's grace saved him.

4. Paul's EDUCATION outside the Gospel v. 14.

a. He was trained in Judaism

This is gained from the verb "profited" which is a military term for "striking forward." Paul was a brilliant student (imperfect tense) under Gamaliel (Phil. 3:4-6). Paul records he went beyond his fellow students in his progress to learn Judaism.

b. He was zealous in Judaism

Paul was a super enthusiast in Judaism. He was an uncompromising partisan. While he does not claim to be a "zealot," he does say he really worked at the interpretation of the law as the Pharisees saw it (Acts 26:5). Paul was no push over, but when he realized the grace of God salvation--that was it. He capitulated to the Lord jesus Christ as being alone sufficient.

Conclusion So here we are today. A works system was rejected by Paul in favor of a grace system. The same choice is before us now. Oh, choose grace that saves and flee works which only condemn! Do it, dear friend, do it NOW!