

Apostolic Commendation

Scripture: Galatians 2:1-10

Code: 1654

1974

Now, this part of the book of Galatians contains the defense of Paul, in which he states clearly, and then proves that his apostleship is, in fact, from God. The constant problem of Paul's life and ministry was the incessant and insidious work of false teachers. Paul would go into an area and he would proclaim the truth and he would be soon followed into the area by Satan's emissaries who would then sow the seeds of false doctrine. Particularly damaging to Paul's work were a group of false teachers who fall under the title Judaizers. And Judaizers were trying to impose legalism as a way to God and as a way of life. And wherever Paul went throughout his ministry, they followed on his heels. He would plant the gospel of grace, and they would come into the same field with their legalistic plow and try to uproot everything Paul had planted. And they had a tremendous effect on the early church. They decidedly troubled the early church. Paul had gone to the area of Galatia on the first missionary journey and, there, had established the churches. And soon after he had left Galatia, they had come there. The Judaizers had arrived and they had told the Galatians they needed to be circumcised and become Jews first before they could get saved and then they needed to live a life of ceremony and ritual like Judaism.

Now, the whole issue of this really has some pertinence for us today. And as you study this section of Galatians, you kind of get a little bit itchy and you say, When do we get to the good part? When do we get to the practical stuff? When do we get to chapter 3, or at least the last of 2? And why all of this detail about Paul's apostleship? But it's really very important for us because we must find somewhere in the Scripture the establishment of New Testament authority. And the whole issue is important for us today because both Paul and the gospel of grace are still under attack. There are those today who would tell us not to pay much attention to Paul's writings. They would deny that Paul spoke for Jesus Christ. They would ignore his claim to divine revelation. They would question his authenticity. And many of them would say that he never really wrote many of the books of the New Testament which he claimed to write. In fact, one of the greatest studies that you ever make in seminary, usually you take it the first or second year that you're in seminary, is the study of New Testament Introduction. And you go through every book in the New Testament and you find all of the critics claiming all the way through that the people who said they wrote these books didn't, in fact, write them. That's one of the great liberal arguments against the Scripture, that they were not written by the people who claimed to have written them. And so it is important for us, as a foundation, to be convinced that these men really spoke for God.

Now, during Paul's lifetime, the very basis of all the attack was aimed at his authority. Since he wasn't, in the purest sense of the word, one of the twelve apostles who walked with Jesus, then people would disparage his claim to apostleship on that basis. And so he was forever having to defend his apostleship. And, you see, once they had undermined his apostleship, then they could attack his doctrine. Now, the Judaizers came to Galatia and they claimed that Paul was no apostle at all, that there was no point in listening to what he said or in believing what he taught because he didn't have any authority. And they said we are the authority. All false teachers claim that. And they said we are the authority because we're from Jerusalem, we're from the mother church and the apostles at Jerusalem are the ones who call the shots and doctrine. And so we represent the true apostles and the true gospel and Paul is a heretic. And so they followed him around with their legalistic plow, plowing up everything that he sowed in grace. And, believe me, the apostle Paul just got to the place where he simply expected this. In Acts, chapter 20, for example, he says in verse 28 to the elders of Ephesus as he prepares to leave, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." Now, he says to the elders, you watch the flock, you oversee the flock or rule the flock and you feed the flock, "For I know," verse 29, "I know this..." It got to be such an obvious thing that Paul was confident. He says "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." In fact, he went on to say, I spent three years warning you about it. His steps were so dogged by these false teachers that he anticipated it. He knew it would happen. He no sooner comes to the place where he says good-bye at Ephesus, than he follows it by saying, and get ready, because they'll come, and they did, inevitably. By the time you get to the book of Revelation, Ephesus is on the way out. And today there is no church there and hasn't been for centuries. In II Timothy, chapter 4 and verse 3, Paul writing to Timothy, expressed the same thought. He says, "For the time will come..." That's a pretty straight statement. He doesn't say it may come; he says it will come. "...when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. They shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables." In other words, instead of hearing truth, they'll turn their ears toward false doctrine that carries the thoughts that their fancy wants, and they'll drift from the truth and stop enduring sound doctrine. He says, Timothy, just expect it; it'll come. It's inevitable. Wherever you sow the seed of the truth, you're going to find there's going to be sowing done by Satan. So the apostle Paul, all of his life, wound up fighting Satan's false teachers. And he made a great classification in II Corinthians when he said they appear as angels of...what?...of light. And here he writes to the Galatians and he is answering these false teachers who have begun to undermine his authority. He writes to the four churches which he established there: Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Antioch and Pisidia, and he defends to them his apostolic authority.

Now, let me give you some hooks to hang this whole little section on. He goes at his defense three ways. One, he shows his apostolic credentials in verses 10 to 24, and we studied this that from 10 to

24, he really shows his credentials as an apostle. Now, in chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, which we'll study tonight, he shows his apostolic commendation. You see, in 10 to 24, he just gives his personal testimony. But in 1 to 10 of chapter 2, which we'll look at, he gives the apostolic commendation. That is, the other apostles who knew him commended him. So he didn't just stand on the testimony of his own life. There were others who saw it and agreed. Thirdly, he defends his apostleship by showing his apostolic confidence in chapter 2, verses 11 to 21. You say, what do you mean by that? I mean, he runs into Peter and Peter is blowing it...remember, in Antioch when he was reverting to legalism and what did Paul do...he withstood him...what?...to the face, openly. Now, anybody that would withstand an apostle to the face and tell him what he ought to do and how to behave is going to have to have some authority himself. Right? So Paul, in the first part, chapter 1:10-24, apostolic credentials. The second part, 2:1-10, apostolic commendation. The third part, apostolic confidence as he exerts his authority over another apostle, even perhaps the chief of the apostles. So in chapters 1 and 2 he is nailing down his right to speak for God as an apostle. And then in chapters 3 to 6 he speaks for God and doesn't bother to defend it anymore.

Now, we've studied the first aspect of his defense, his apostolic credentials, and we saw, by the testimony of his life in three parts, pre-conversion, conversion and post-conversion, that he indeed was an apostle. He made the claim in 1:11, "I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. I didn't receive it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." So he makes this claim that what he has is not something he was taught, but it's something God gave him by revelation. He speaks, in fact, for God. Then from verse 13 to 24, he proved it by his personal testimony. Now, he pressed, then...and I want you to get this, cause you'll miss the whole point tonight if you don't catch this transition...the whole point of verses 10 to 24 is to show his independence, that he didn't need to be taught by the other apostles because God gave him his message and that's an airtight convincing argument. But you know what it does? It leaves him open to some criticism. Because as sure as he really goes on and on about his independence, somebody's going to come along and say, Yeah, Paul, and that's just your problem. Your independence is really anarchy. In fact, you're out there all alone. You weren't taught by the apostles. That's why you're so goofed up. And so they find in the loophole of his independence the possibility of another angle in which to undermine him. They will agree with his independence and say, Oh, fine, you're independent, nobody told you any of this stuff. Well, do you realize that your independence is anarchy and your gospel is sectarian and your teaching is different than Peter's and the other apostles? And so as a result they would claim that the church had two gospels, Paul's gospel and the gospel of the rest of the apostles. And then they would start arguing, which one do we accept. Well, obviously, we would accept the others, right, because there's 12 of them saying the same thing. We're not going to listen to Paul. He's all alone out here and he never heard it from anybody else, he just got it up himself. So one of the most devastating arguments that ever could come from the Judaizers was the claim that Paul's independence was just his problem. So he wants to answer that issue. Yes, he's independent. He got his revelation from God, but don't twist that. He's not just independent. And in 2:1-10, he tells how he went to Jerusalem and the rest of the apostles

who were there, the leaders, talked to him, heard what he preached, patted him on the back, gave him the right hand of fellowship and said, Go to it, brother; you're preaching the same thing we're preaching. You see how important that kind of an argument is? So he covers it from both angles. Yes, told them clearly that his gospel didn't come from men, but he shows now that it wasn't one whit different than the other apostles. His gospel was granted independent, but it wasn't independent in terms of content. He said to the...in 10 through 24...he said, I only went to Jerusalem for 15 days. I didn't get my gospel then. It came from God. Now, in chapter 2, he tells about a longer visit to Jerusalem 14 years later when he talked with the apostles and they confirmed him and commended him.

Now, let's look at the passage beginning in verse 1 and we'll divide it into four parts...this part of his defense: his coming, his companion, his commission and finally, his commendation. Let's look at his coming as he comes to Jerusalem. Verses 1 and 2: "Then 14 years after, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me also." Now, this really just sets the scene. It's clear from the previous passage, I think, that Paul's contacts with the apostles since his conversion were nil. He went there for 15 days. He went there in Acts 11:27-30 just on a relief mission with Barnabas and took some money for the poor saints and went back to Antioch. So he had no time in his life when he could subject himself to teaching from the apostles, but rather was independent in his revelation. But 14 years after...14 years after what?...14 years after verse 18 of chapter 1, which says, "Then after three years I went to Jerusalem..." He was saved, three years later he went to Jerusalem, 14 years later, he went back again. The time he went three years later, he stayed how long?...15 days. Now, 14 years later he goes back. Now, it's obvious he didn't go back to get his message. He's been preaching it for 17 years. But he did go back. And notice it says he went up again to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is always up as we've seen so many times. Now, these were 14 years of busy ministry. And if you want to know what was going on in those 14 years, you could just back up to verse 21 of chapter 1. He says "I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they had heard only, he who persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." So the reputation of his ministry floated around for 14 years, although they never met him face to face. Between the 15-day trip and the other trip, 14 years lapsed...14 years of working in Syria and Cilicia. Part of the time, remember, he went to Antioch and was a pastor with Barnabas. And then he went on his first missionary journey with Barnabas. He went on a relief mission to Jerusalem. All of these things occurred. And now, 14 years later from the last trip, he comes back again, and this time, with Barnabas and with Titus. Now, let me just give you my own viewpoint on this. I believe this was the trip...and I'm not alone in believing this, by any means...but I believe this is the trip recorded in Acts 15, and we studied that some weeks back on Sunday morning, the Jerusalem Council. And we'll see that as we kind of cross back and forth tonight in our study. Now, why did he go to Jerusalem at this time? For what reason? Well, I think it's important that we know that because if he says "14 years after I went again to Jerusalem" the Judaizers are going to say, yes, you know why he went to Jerusalem, because they demand that he get down there and get straightened out...that he went

under the pressure of the apostles of the mother church. Or somebody's gonna say he went in desperation to try to learn the truth. No. Verse 2, he clears it up. "I went up by"...what?..."revelation..." God told him to go, that's why he went. And, again, he is totally independent in terms of God's direction in his life. And he went there because God wanted him to go. Now, it is true that the church in Antioch kind of confirmed that and sent him on his way. Chapter 15, verse 2 of Acts says, "When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them,"...that is with the Judaizers..."they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church..." It's interesting how that the Spirit of God wanted Paul in Jerusalem and the Spirit probably made His will known through the church. He had done that, remember, in chapter 13, verse 2. The Spirit came to the leaders of the church. I mean, it lists all the leaders of Antioch. And it says, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them.'" So the Spirit at Antioch had, at least on one occasion, revealed His will through the leaders of the church. So perhaps the revelation came to all of them and not just to Paul. And so he said, then, I went to Jerusalem by revelation and that is a really important statement for Paul to make because he wants them to know that he didn't go under pressure from the apostles to get his doctrine straightened out. And he didn't go because he was at the end of his rope and didn't know the truth and he wanted to get down there to learn it. Now, verse 2 continues with an important statement. When he got there, he says, he "communicated unto them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles"...then he goes on..."but privately to them who were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." Now, just take the phrase he "communicated to them the gospel." When he got there...and you can read it in Acts, chapter 15...he announced the truth that he had preached and how God had blessed. But you'll notice, first of all, he says this, "and communicated unto them," but then later on he says "but privately to them." Now, apparently, those two "thems" are different. The first "them" would be the church in general and if you go to Acts 15, verses 4 and 5, you'll find out that when he got there, he told everybody what was going on. "When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and elders and they declared all things that God had done with them." So when they got there, there was a time when they met with the whole church. But it says, also, the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, he privately communicated to them who were of reputation. So he had a private meeting with the leaders of the church. Now, he had been preaching this particular gospel to the Gentiles, and he simply stated what it was. It was the gospel of grace. It wasn't any different than what they had been preaching. But you know what had happened, don't you? The circumcision party had come along and they said in Acts 15:1 that if somebody doesn't get circumcised, they can't get saved. And it became such a big issue that it had to be resolved. And so the Holy Spirit says, Paul, you pack up A-1 exhibit: Titus...one saved, converted, uncircumcised Gentile...and you and Barnabas haul him down to Jerusalem and let's get this thing settled. It's amazing how the presence of one uncircumcised, saved Gentile has a tremendous weight against the argument. And so it wasn't just gonna be academic; it was gonna be personal because they had a living, breathing Gentile right in front of them to deal with.

If they were gonna say you have to be circumcised to be saved, they're gonna have to talk Titus out of his salvation. Pretty dynamic illustration.

Well, when they preached...and I think this is interesting...in Acts 15 when they announced their message; you know how they defended it? They said that God had confirmed their message with miracles, which I think is very important. It says in verse 12, "Then all the multitude kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul"... Acts 15:12..."declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." Now we've told you something. God confirms His Word by miracles. And God does not confirm error. Right? If God attends the preaching of the Word with miracles and signs authored by God, then God is approving the message. And that was the devastating argument of Paul when he got there. We saw God do miracles and God does not corroborate or confirm or bless error. Well, look at the little note about privately in verse 2. "...but privately he spoke to them of reputation..." Now, the other course that they followed aside from the public thing...and it was important that he'd state this to everybody just so that they'd know that God had blessed the gospel to the Gentiles as was. And, incidentally, I don't think the whole church had a problem with it; I think it just was brought out publicly. I think the Judaizers were the ones that had the problem. The normal believers in Jerusalem didn't think you had to get circumcised. But the problem needed to be dealt with openly and thus it was. But he met with the leading apostles in a private meeting. You say, who was there?...probably Paul and Barnabas, James, Peter and John. Now, James was not an apostle. This is James the brother of Jesus, the leader of the Jerusalem church. So they met. I would just venture a guess that Paul and Barnabas met first with the leaders before he met with the congregation. You see, they had never heard this guy much. And in 17 years, they hadn't heard at all of him. And so they wanted to hear what he'd been preaching that had created all this stir and so he came in and he told them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles...the same gospel.

Let me show you a little insight into the man, Paul, who just...you know, he had a little fiery streak in him. I imagine he had a temper that the Spirit kept a good deal of the lid on. But I want you to see something that's interesting. He says, "but privately to them who were of reputation..." Now, there's sarcasm in that...those who were of reputation, those of repute. Now, I want you to notice something. Four times he calls James and Peter and John by that title...those who were of repute. In verse 2, twice in verse 6 and again in verse 9, and there it's, you know, the pillars of the church. And in each of those, there's a sarcasm. But the sarcasm is not directed at those leaders; it is directed at the Judaizers because, apparently, this was their coined phrase. Apparently, when they got to Galatia, they said, Well, our leaders those of repute, our big shots in Jerusalem, why they...such and such and such. And so he writes back and says I had a private meeting with your big shots. In other words, the sarcasm is not directed at James and Peter and John; it's directed at the Judaizers who are in an absolutely unbiblical, ungodly fashion, venerating these men for their own purposes. Do you see? They were venerating them for their own purposes, not for the sake of the men themselves who didn't need veneration anyway. And so the language does have sarcasm in it, but it is not directed at James

and Peter and John, but at the Judaizing legalists who have over-exalted them at the expense of Paul. They keep over-exalting them all the time and apparently this little phrase was their thing...those of repute, as if to say Paul was of disrepute. And so Paul says, Well, I met with yours of repute and he throws that phrase out four times, which is really an interesting insight into the fact that you could get to him. You could get to Paul. (Laughter) He was human. Now, he says, the reason I had this private meeting with them was "lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." A most interesting statement. He said, I met with them because I didn't want to spend my whole life doing something that was going to wind up as a big waste. You say, Paul, what do you mean? I mean this. If I'm going around preaching Christ, and I'm going around preaching the gospel of justification by grace through faith without works, and the other apostles, though in principle agreeing with me, don't come out and stand strong with me, then the Judaizers are going to have something to hold onto and they're going to undermine everything I do. You see, he didn't come down there to get his doctrine straightened out; he came down there to get the apostles to stand with him so that he wouldn't have these Judaizers chasing him all over the world undermining everything he did and saying, well, the apostles are behind us. Now, we know the apostles wouldn't have been against Paul. He preached the same gospel they did. But if they were either noncommittal or soft on legalism, soft on Judaizing, then his work among the Gentiles would be just ripped up. He had to write back to the Galatians and say, You want to hear something? All of the apostles in Jerusalem agree with me. Now what do you think that's going to do to the Judaizers? That's it. That's the end. And so he said, I came, and I had a private meeting because more than anything I wanted the support of the leaders because I didn't want to spend all my life working, preaching Christ and not having them stand with me, but leaving the door open for somebody to undermine the work. And believe me, if there wasn't a strong stand against heresy, then the effectiveness of Paul's work would have been weakened. And he met with them privately to get their support and then he came out and made his public declaration, knowing that they were standing with him. Now, it wasn't that Paul was in doubt about his gospel. No, no. It wasn't that he had misgivings. I mean, for 17 years he'd been preaching it. It was that he wanted everybody to stand with him. He wanted to destroy the influence of the Judaizers. He didn't need to strengthen his own conviction. So it was a tense moment and his coming really set the stage.

Let's look secondly at his companion...verse 3. "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek,"...I like this..."was compelled to be circumcised." Now, that is just an overwhelming argument. The Judaizers said, We're from Jerusalem and according to the Jerusalem church, you've got to get circumcised before you can get saved. And Paul says, You know what? Titus came with me. He's a Gentile. They didn't make him get circumcised. See? (Laughter) Now, when you start studying verses 3 to 5, you really get into a difficult passage. In fact, Lightfoot calls it a shipwreck of Greek grammar. It is a disaster to try to interpret. Try to translate is bad enough. In fact, it's almost untranslatable. Paul gets emotional. And this is where you can't get this in the English. Paul is so emotional here that he has a whole bunch of sentences which he never finishes. He just why you-bn-rw-wh, and off he goes somewhere else and I-I-str-en, you know, and it's all...and what you wind up doing is trying to slap parentheses in everywhere to try to piece it together. If you were to sit down and read it in a Greek

text, it would make no sense. It has to be put together. And the best we can do with it is just to do the best we can. And we just...what we get is a guy who's just getting emotional and excited. And he's done it before. At the beginning of the book of Ephesians he does...you know what he does, the very opposite thing in the book of Ephesians. He starts talking about the blessings of God and he has the longest sentence in the whole Bible. Fourteen verses and he never puts a period. He just keeps going and going and going and going. You keep going, stop, stop, Paul, stop. I can't take another one, see. Finally, boom, verse 14. Well, here, he's the same kind of excitement and he winds up with short little jabby half sentences and we try to put it together. Well, let's get it the best we can. "Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." And this was really important, you see, because this made the whole issue very, very real. It wasn't academic; it was personal. Here's Titus. Paul walks in and says, I want you to meet my brother Titus...brother in the Lord. Give him your testimony, Titus (laughter). See? And old Titus comes on with a testimony and you know what; what are they gonna say? Well, he has not been circumcised. That doesn't matter. He's living proof that you don't need to get circumcised. And you know what's so exciting for Paul to write back is that the Jerusalem church didn't even compel him to circumcised. Would the Jerusalem church receive him? Boy, wasn't that important for the Galatians to know? Because the Judaizers had lied. The Judaizers had said, we represent the Jerusalem church. They did not. James declared they did not. They did not. That's a heavy blow. The Judaizers looked to Jerusalem for their corroboration and they failed to get it. Now, listen. If the Jerusalem apostles didn't require this Gentile to get circumcised, then how could the Judaizers require it of Gentiles outside Jerusalem? Ridiculous! Ridiculous. You say, ah, ah, ah, wait a minute. Acts 16:3, Paul required Timothy to get circumcised. You're right. You know why? Timothy was half-Jewish and Paul knew that if he got circumcised that would just give him that much better opportunity to reach Jewish people. But remember, he was half-Jewish. And Paul was not taking a Gentile and getting him circumcised to get him saved. Paul allowed Timothy to be circumcised because it would give him entrance into Jewish places as one of them. If Paul had allowed Titus to get circumcised, he would have undermined his entire gospel of grace. And the beautiful thing is the apostles in Jerusalem didn't require it. No, sir. No. Circumcision is not necessary for salvation. Well, at the Jerusalem Council, boy, they came down solid on this one. After that private meeting, Peter comes out in verse 6 of Acts 15 and "Peter rose up"...verse 7..."and said...'Men and brethren, you know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.'" Who was that?...Cornelius. "And God, who knows the hearts bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Then he says this, "Now, therefore, why put God to the test to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" We couldn't even handle legalism; what do you want to stick it on these Gentiles for? "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." And James followed with a speech, "Men and brethren"...verse 13..."hearken to me..." and he goes on and in verse 19 he wraps it up. My judgment is that "we trouble not them, who from among the Gentiles are turned to God." In other words, we'll just accept them by faith, through grace.

We don't need to add anything.

Well, at that whole meeting the Judaizers were screaming blue murder, believe me. They were standing up and giving what they thought and we find in verse 4 that they give their point of view. Let's look at it. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Now, look, let's look at it carefully. Paul won a great victory according to verse 3. They didn't make Titus get circumcised, but it didn't come easy. Because there were the Judaizers there...look what he calls them..."that because of false brethren." New English Bible translates that "sham Christians." Phillips translates it "pseudo-Christians." Both are very accurate definitions. These false brethren were not true believers; they were legalists. And if you're a legalist, my friend, you can't be saved. Did you know that? If you are a legalist, you cannot be saved and still be a legalist. Why? Galatians 5:2: "If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." If you do one thing to earn your salvation, you have wiped out grace. That's right. Now, you know, Paul really hassled by these false brethren. You remember his little recitation of his problems? Listen to this problem. This is a little catalog. He says, I've had a lot of things going in my life. "I received 40 stripes, save one, five times from the Jews, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep, in journeys often, in perils of water, perils of robbers, perils of mine own countrymen, perils by the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brethren." These people who claimed to be part of the church, sham Christians, mingled in, spying out the liberty of the believers like scouts searching out the weak points of the enemy, preparing the attack. Now, notice how these false brethren came...very interesting. "That because of false brethren unawares brought in..." Now, that's a passive verb. It means they were secretly smuggled in. You say, who smuggled them in? If that's a passive verb, if we want to push the issue, somebody smuggled them in. You say, who smuggled in the Judaizers? Well, some people say that the Pharisees did. Possible. Some people say some ex-priests did. Possible. Others say it's some people zealous for the law. We don't know. But I'll tell you behind the scenes who smuggled them in. Satan did. Because they were his emissaries. Because it says very clearly in Matthew 13:25 that the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. And who's the enemy?...Satan...Satan. It was Satan that sowed them. Satan actually brought in these false brethren. You know, a false teacher is just a pawn of Satan. And, you know, it wasn't very obvious. It says that they came in secretly. They sneaked in. They slipped in. Phillips says they wormed their way in. So Satan manages to sneak in some false teachers. Boy, I'm telling you, folks, Satan is still at it. He is still at it. As I said before, Paul said, I know that when I'm done and when I leave, that of your own selves, shall men arise to lead you astray into perverse things...right out of your own midst. Satan's gonna sow that right in. And we know it happens. It happens right here. We know it. Now, you say, what'll they do there? Well, they're spying out our liberty. They were spying out our liberty. They were trying to find the weak points of the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. That's a great statement. That's really the theme of the book of Galatians, the liberty which we have in Christ Jesus. What did Jesus say? "If the Son shall make you free"...what?... "you shall be free for real." A lot of phony freedoms, but if He makes you free, you're

free for real. Now, they were looking in there, spying around, trying to find somebody abusing liberty, trying to find some little loophole. We're going to talk a lot about liberty. Boy, you get to thinking about the liberty we have in Christ. I'm telling you, the Christian life is so exciting. It's so fantastic. All I have to do in my life is be filled with the Spirit and do whatever I want. What liberty! What liberty. In Christ we have freedom from the law as a way to God. We have freedom from the curse of the law, which is death. We have freedom from the external ceremonies, which the Old Testament law demanded. Freedom! And it is enough to say at this point that Christ makes us free from whatever it is that we're hung up with. You know, it's a fantastic thing. I've often looked at freedom from the standpoint of, have you ever seen anybody work a problem. Sometimes I'll see my kids working, maybe Matt works a mathematics problem, an arithmetic problem, and finally he gets the problem done and he's finished. But until he comes to the answer, he's in bondage to the problem. You know, that's the way I look at men. No man is ever free from the struggle of existence until he knows the truth. Only the truth makes you free. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and"...what?..."the truth shall make you free." Until you come to the truth, you can't be free from the struggle. You see a scientist in a lab and he's gotta come to an answer and he works and he figures formulas and he mixes things and finally he comes out of there and says, Eureka, I've got it, see. The truth has set him free from the problem. And Jesus came along and said, You've got a problem: You. Let me set you free from you. The truth shall make you free and in Christ we're free in a glorious, glorious kind of freedom that is not license; it is freedom to do what is right and enjoy it. "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death," said Paul. And so many places in Romans he goes over that. He says in chapter 7, he says, we used to be bound to one husband; we're free and married to Christ. In chapter 6, we're freed from the old master to serve a new master. Free from the sin, we become servants of righteousness. So much is said in the Bible about our freedom. In Galatians 5:1 he says, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." What a glorious freedom we have. And I like this one. II Corinthians 3:17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." If you're under the control of the Holy Spirit, you have the freedom to do as you desire. Fantastic! Fantastic! The law of liberty. Now, that isn't license. No, no, no. No, don't use your freedom as a cloak of maliciousness, said Peter. And he says in 5:13 of Galatians, Paul does, we do not use liberty "for an occasion to the flesh." No. Well, the Judaizers couldn't tolerate liberty at all. They loved bondage. They loved a system that just beat in on you. So they were spying out the liberty with which Christ made us free. And then it says, "that they might bring us into bondage." They wanted to make slaves out of everybody again. They loved their bondage. They wanted to put on them a yoke and that's what Peter was talking about when he said, Are you kidding? What do we want to yoke up these people for when we couldn't even stand it?

Well, let's look at verse 5 and let's see what they did. These Judaizers got their message across, they spied out, they said what they wanted to say. And it says in 5, "to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." What that says is this. We did not yield submission to them for one moment. Aren't you glad? Aren't you glad we're not under law? Why didn't you yield?... "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you"...with you Galatians.

You see, Paul had evangelized the Galatians on the basis of grace. They had received that. Then in comes this gospel of law. And Paul says, we stuck to the truth that you might continue in grace. The unyielding stand of Paul and Barnabas and their strong support by the Jerusalem apostles and leaders was to show the Judaizers that from now on, no Judaizer could ever say that Paul deceived you. No Judaizer could ever say that the prominent leaders of Jerusalem agree with us, not him, because here's their statement. No, he says. Verse 5, we gave them place, no, not for a moment, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." You say, boy, that Paul is really a hardhead. No, he was not stubborn and inflexible. He was gentle. He was forbearing. He said in I Corinthians 9 he would become all things to all men, right. But I'll tell you one thing, he'd never altar the gospel, no, sir. The same chapter, I Corinthians 9, he talks about his magnanimous character in terms of method, but when he comes down to the real issue of truth in 9:12, he says "Nevertheless, we have not used this right, but bear all things lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." He had a tremendous freedom about method. He wouldn't do one thing that would any way hinder the truth. Not at all. The issue here wasn't truth; it was just method. Paul could make concessions to weak Christians, but he couldn't make concessions to false Christians. That's important. Well, so he says here that Titus came along and he was a pretty convincing argument. And even though the Judaizers tried to spy out our liberty and bring us back into slavery again, we gave them no place, that the truth might continue. So we see his coming, his companion.

Thirdly, quickly, we see his commission. And Paul goes from here and this is the part that gets kind of tangled up but we'll untangle it as best we can. Now, look at verse 6. "But of these who seemed to be somewhat..." And here's that same phrase, "those of repute" or reputation. He says, your uppity-ups, your hot shots, whatever they were, it makes no matter to me. That's kind of interesting isn't it? Now, he's not knocking them but he's spelling the truth. He says, your men of repute, whatever they were, it doesn't make any difference to me, it doesn't make any difference to God either for that matter because God accepts no man's person. Again, he uses the Judaizers phrase, "the influential." Your somebodies, and he kind of mumbles as it were, under his breath, whoever they are, makes no difference to me. You say, well, how can he depreciate such godly men? He's not. He's not. He's speaking a truth. He says, whatever they were, it doesn't make any difference to me. Why? Because they're equals. He saying I'm not looking up to them. I'm on the same level. I'm an apostle. And it doesn't matter to God because God doesn't take people on the basis of their person. What probably happened...this is just reading into it, but it's a likely possibility...what probably happened was that they exalted these guys because of their earthly companionship with Jesus...the Judaizers. And they depreciated Paul because he had not had that privilege. And he is saying simply here, it doesn't matter what kind of person they were or when they lived or what they did; God doesn't accept people on that basis. God plays no favorites. Acts 10:34, a good verse to remember, "God is no respecter of persons." If you are, you're outside His frames. God plays no favorites. God doesn't favor some over others on the basis of personal distinction, position or reputation or anything else. So he really clobbers away their veneration of these Jerusalem apostles. And he says, I'm equal to them. They're not anything to me, nor to God. Later on in his life, Paul acknowledged this. He said, "I am what I

am"...what?..."by the grace of God." So he wasn't proud, he wasn't boastful; he was merely equalizing them all under grace. And then this most fantastic statement, the end of verse 6, "for they who seemed to be somewhat"...and he uses the same word again, those somebodies of yours..."in conference added nothing to me." Wow! Seventeen years he's been out there all alone, he arrives in Jerusalem, they didn't have one single thing to add to what he knew. Now, that establishes his authority doesn't it? They had nothing to say to me. No changes. Went down there, talked it all over, nothing to say. You've got it all, Paul; it's all there. Fantastic! Now, you know old James had a hard time with this. You know, he...you remember at the end of the Council, he decided that they ought to add a few things over there to the Gentiles. We'll accept them and their salvation, sure, but there's a few things they ought to do. He says you ought to abstain from pollution of idols, fornication, things strangled in blood because you don't want to offend the Jews. That wasn't for salvation; that's just for your testimony's sake. Don't...you know, don't use your liberty and then make a lot of Jews trip up because they're still studying Moses. Many Jews are still very, very devoted to Moses, so don't needlessly tread on them, which was wise. But James had a lot of trouble making the break. Over in chapter 21, verse 17...interesting. "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went into James" and the other elders "and when he had greeted them, he declared particularly the things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." This is a later time. "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord and said unto him, 'Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe and they are all zealous of the law. And they all informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the custom. What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do, therefore, this that we say to thee. We have four men who have a vow on them.'" And he tells him to take this vow. "As touching the Gentiles who believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing except only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication." And Paul said, okay, he took them in and he went to the purification, etc., etc. James was always kind of hanging on to these last vestiges of Judaism. But this was not to add to salvation; this was simply to add to the fact that the Gentile would not want needlessly to do those things which would offend the Jew and thus lose his ability to communicate the gospel to him. So they couldn't add anything. Verse 7, watch..."But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter..." Stop there. Now, you know, some people have said, oh, two gospels. There is. It says it. When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision...and that the gospel of the circumcision...two gospels. Well, what you have to bring in here is a little note in the Greek language. There is in the Greek what we call, for all of you Greek students, an objective genitive. You say, well, I'm glad to know that, let me get that down. Objective genitive, what does it mean? Well, just in case you want to look it up, it is this. An objective genitive is a Greek form where the genitive case receives the action. And that is what you have here in both cases. It should read this way. But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel to the uncircumcision was committed to me and the gospel to the

circumcision, unto Peter. It is not "of" in terms of definition; it is "to" in terms of direction. Same gospel. Paul gave it to the Gentiles; Peter gave it to the Jews, that's all. Same gospel. Just one gospel. In fact, if you go back into verses 6 through 9 you'll see that Paul says if anybody comes with another gospel let him be anathema...anathema. And, incidentally, some people are always wanting to pit Peter against Paul. Liberal theologians do that all the time...well, Peter's gospel and Paul's gospel. This is what Peter said about Paul. He says, "even as our beloved brother, Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you." He says you ought to account "that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" as Paul told you. He just corroborates Paul. There was no disagreement at all. They agreed...same gospel. And then this added dramatic statement. "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision"...that is to the Jews..."the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." You know what else? The same Holy Spirit empowered both of them. They had the same message, they had the same Spirit, it was just a question of two whom they went.

Well, verse 9. "When"...and now he names these somebodies that he's been sarcastically mentioning..."When James"...that's the brother of our Lord Jesus, not an apostle, but the leader of the Jerusalem church..."When James, Cephas"...that's Peter..."and John, who seemed to be"...somebodies...there's that same phrase..."pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me..." Isn't that interesting? They saw Paul and they knew right away that God had graciously called him. His commission was clear. They didn't have any question about it. They saw him and they said, this is it. The same gospel he's directed to the uncircumcision, we to the circumcision, and they recognized this...look, they "perceived the grace that was given unto me." You know, grace is not only active in your salvation; it's active in your service, isn't it? That's right. I often think of my own life. You know, when I look at my own ministry and how blessed I am. And I just praise God. I mean, there are times when I just think in my mind, how in the world did I ever get into such a glorious opportunity as this? And the only answer is just one word...grace...grace. Not Grace Church, but God's grace...God's grace. There's no other explanation. I had nothing to do with it. Before I was born, God had already planned by His grace that I would be here. This is His will. It's grace. I didn't earn it. I don't deserve it. It's grace. And these guys looked at Paul and they said, it's grace. It's obvious. Look at him. Look at the power. Look at the message...same message, same power. And so the argument by this time is so overwhelming that the Judaizers have nothing to stand on...absolutely nothing.

Well, let's go to the last point. As a result of his coming, his companion and his commission, when they saw all these things, they wrapped it up with his commendation. Look at verse 9. I love it. "When James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship..." That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? You say, what is the right hands of fellowship? Well, clasped right hands were the sign of friendship, trust and promise. You know, we shake hands with everybody. Oh, hello, how are you and you shake hands. It doesn't mean anything. There was a day when it meant something. And sometimes Christians shake hands a little differently. They kind of go up and grab a little more of the hand and off

the thumb and that kind of a little different thing. But in those days, the right hand clasped was a sign of promise and trust and friendship and vows were made like that. The right hand of koinonia...watch...the noun of koinonia is koinonos...partner. Listen...imagine what the Judaizers are thinking when they read Galatians. The Jerusalem apostles took our hands and said, You're partners in our work. That's it. It's all over for the Judaizers. Nothing to stand on. Nothing to stand on at all. And they said "that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision"...or the Jews. And so they were accepted as partners in the ministry.

You know, in every wonderful time of fellowship, there's always one little deal you gotta do. Somebody always throws in one little "finally, however, let me say this." Like in Acts 15 where James says, Of course, don't do this and don't do this. And so they throw this little beauty in in verse 10, "only that you would remember the poor..." In other words, send us an offering once in awhile, will you. Down here in Jerusalem we got some needs, you know (laughter). That's an interesting thing, but there was a very difficult situation in the church at Jerusalem because of the tremendous amount of poor people in the city. And pilgrims would come to Jerusalem, you know, and they'd get saved when they were there and they wouldn't want to go home. So they were piling up pilgrims, you know, who had no means of support. And so there needed to be funds coming in from other sources. And many times in the life of Paul he did this and look at the end of verse 10. "...the same which I also was"...spoudazo...eager or zealous to do. That's what he wanted to do. And you know, on one of his statements in Acts 24:17, he says that one of the purposes of his third journey was just to get money to send to the needy at Jerusalem. So he says, continue to remember the poor. You know, I think Christianity may be...and I think we who are in the fundamental end of it, tend to shy away from the responsibility that we have toward the poor. And I think those of us who are sort of politically oriented toward capitalism and "look buddy, if you want to eat, you work" thing, you know, that kind of a deal, I think we sometimes tend to go a little overboard and become uncaring in some cases when people have real needs. Now, it is for the poor saints that we are to care. And I really believe this is a responsibility of the church and I praise God that we have such a thing as a deacon's fund in which there are monies available for those in need because if we shut up the valves of our compassion to those in need, we have denied our faith. There must be that kind of sensitivity and the dear apostle Paul spent the rest of his ministerial life in tremendous concern about this. In I Corinthians 16, "Now, concerning the collection..."...that great text which you've heard in many churches..."Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." And again and again he repeats this. In II Corinthians, chapter 9, he lays down more instruction, in Romans 15, the same thing. Beloved, it's the responsibility of the church to care for the poor who are in need. And that doesn't mean the people are to freeload off the church. But don't worry about that. You let God worry about that. If we care for their needs, you let God worry about how they got in that mess.

Well, that's a pretty academic passage and Paul gives the details of his commendation and he sets the Galatians straight as to his approval by the Jerusalem apostles and his authority from God. You say, John, what does all that say to me? Well, I don't know what it says to you specifically, but I can wrap up a few things it says to me. Listen. Number one, it tells me about Paul and his ministry. And just from a historical standpoint, I enjoyed the study...just to know a little more about the man, just to know a little more about his heart and about the conflicts of his life helps me as a minister to see life in the real perspective that it is. Secondly, it helps me to establish in my own mind the absolute authority that the apostles had. And believe me, if our faith isn't based on authority, then our faith isn't based on anything. And thirdly, you know what I see here that I just love? I see another look at New Testament unity. It is not a hodgepodge of the theology of Paul and the theology of Peter and the theology of John; it is the unity. It is the theology of God represented by all these men. I see a beautiful unity in Scripture. And lastly, I see this. I see that the gospel of grace must be defended to the nth degree. And I trust and pray that God has spoken to you through these and other lessons. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for our time together in this area. And we know that the Spirit of God has taught us these things that our faith might be rooted even deeper and more solidly in the foundation that is given in Scripture. And Lord, we also recognize that we need to have some of this same kind of strength of conviction, some of the same kind of courage and boldness that characterized Paul as such an unbelievably strong defender of the faith. God, help us to be such. Help us to believe and to know the truth so that we can stand on the truth of grace and be unmoved from its foundations. We know there are still legalizers. There are still those who would impose works. There are systems coming and going in our world that make demands that persons are saved if they do this and if they do the other. God, help us to be defenders of grace because we know that grace exalts You alone and works simply is an effort to exalt man. And so, God, continue to teach us, even as we think back through these verses and read them again, perhaps, in the days to follow, that our hearts might again be sensitive to the fact that our faith is founded on a rock, the rock of authority granted by Christ to His apostles. And that our faith is to be contended for earnestly. And we praise You that through the years following Paul there have been such men who have contended for the faith in that way and have delivered it up for us even in this hour. May we protect it and defend it for that generation to follow to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in whose Name we pray. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).