



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XI
Issue 252

Not, Neither, But

The Unique Apostleship and Message of Paul

by – Dan Sheridan

Then Haggai the messenger of Yahweh spoke in Yahweh's message to the people (Haggai 1:13, CLNT¹).

In the above Scripture, we see that Yahweh places equal emphasis on message and messenger. This is especially true of the Apostle Paul. Throughout Paul's letters, he is constantly defending himself against attack. The goal of these attacks was to distract people from the message, and the means to that goal was discrediting the messenger. In a court of law, one objective of the defense is to discredit a witness. If the witness can be discredited, his testimony will be thrown out, even if it's true. The Adversary is ever opposing God's present truth, and today that means opposing Paul.

Many have called me a Paul worshiper. I would counter: Who is the greatest Apostle? Paul? No. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whence, holy brethren, partners of a celestial calling, consider the Apostle and Chief Priest of our avowal, Jesus ... (Hebrews 3:1).

The word "apostle," in the above verse means, "commissioner," or "sent one." Had the Father not sent our Lord, there would have been no Apostle Paul – or Peter, or James, or any other apostle – and without apostles, there would be no "beautiful feet" to bring us our evangel of good. Paul himself was a slave of Christ. Like us, he was a mere earthen vessel (c.f. II Corinthians 4:7). We do

1. All Scripture taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament.



not worship earthen vessels; we do not analyze their shape or texture. Yet we do value the treasure within.

In Galatians chapter 1 Paul defends himself, his message and his ministry against the subtlest attack Satan has ever devised: mixing grace with law. Many a declared Christian today may appear godly; yet, to compromise the message God sent to us through His chosen apostle by adding foreign elements is the *ungodliest* of acts.

None can follow Christ today unless they follow Paul, for the words of Paul are the latest and greatest words of Christ. Mixing law with grace leaves no evangel for the unbeliever (Romans 3-4), no power from the evangel for the saint (Romans 6-8), no comprehension of distinctions in God's administrative activities (Romans 9-11), no grasp of the Body's celestial calling (Ephesians), and no understanding of its expectation of glory (Thessalonians).

(see **PAUL**, page 2359)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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PAUL (continued from page 2357)

Imagine going to a cupboard and indiscriminately throwing any handy ingredient into a cake bowl. The end result would not be a cake, but an inedible monstrosity. So, too, are the Sacred Scriptures. Each book of the Bible is good and true, but to mix them without intelligence causes more harm than good.

PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP

Paul, an apostle (NOT from men, NEITHER through a man, BUT through Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who rouses Him from among the dead), and all the brethren with me, to the ecclesias of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gives Himself for our sins, so that He might extricate us out of the present wicked eon, according to the will of our God and Father, to Whom be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen! (Galatians 1:1-5).

This inspired introduction is the source of my title, **"not ... neither ... but."** This construction occurs three times in Galatians chapter one. In each case, the three terms point to the distinctive character of Paul's commission and message.

The first point of distinctiveness concerns Paul's apostleship. His adversaries continually held one thing against him: he was not one of the twelve apostles. Why does Paul distance his apostleship from the agency of man? There was an apostle appointed through man, and it was Matthias, chosen by lot after our Lord's resurrection to fill the place of Judas. The Lord Himself chose twelve apostles, and twelve only. The function of the twelve was to rule the twelve tribes of Israel:

Yet Jesus said to them, "Verily, I am saying to you, that you who follow Me, in the renaissance whenever the Son of Mankind should be seated on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28).

If the Lord chose twelve apostles for the twelve tribes of Israel, the most important question we need to ask is, Why choose Paul? Paul was not the

thirteenth apostle for that calling concerned with the nation of Israel. Paul's message was unique, and so was his apostleship. Christ chose the twelve during His earthly humiliation, but Paul He called from His celestial throne.

Today, you and I have a relationship to Paul similar to that which Israel had with Moses. I will go so far as to say that Paul is our Moses. Just as Moses ascended the mount to receive the law from Yahweh, Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, receiving our evangel directly from its Source. Reading the books of Moses, one discovers the children of Israel to be far from satisfied with God's chosen messenger. It is the same today with Paul. Yet Paul is God's chosen one, whether we like it or not. Paul compares himself with Moses in II Corinthians 3:7-8.

Now if the dispensation of death, by letters chiseled in stone, came in glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look intently into the face of Moses, because of the glory of his face, which was being nullified, how shall not rather the dispensation of the Spirit be in glory?

PAUL'S EVANGEL

I am marveling that thus, swiftly, you are transferred from that which calls you in the grace of Christ, to a different evangel, which is not another, except it be that some who are disturbing you want also to distort the evangel of Christ. But if ever we also, or a messenger out of heaven, should be bringing an evangel to you beside that which we bring to you, let him be anathema! As we have declared before and at present I am saying again, if anyone is bringing you an evangel beside that which you accepted, let him be anathema! For, at present, am I persuading men or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I still pleased men, I were not a slave of Christ. For I am making known to you, brethren, as to the evangel which is being brought by me, that it is not in accord with man. For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you hear of my ►

behavior once, in Judaism, that I inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it. And I progressed in Judaism above many contemporaries in my race, being inherently exceedingly more zealous for the traditions of my fathers (Galatians 1:6-14).

Paul's frustration with the Galatians did not resign him to failure. Rather, it emboldened Him to proclaim the truth with an even greater zeal. Paul does *not* write, "Since all is of God, this is the way things must stay." Never. Paul was a teacher, and teachers teach. Apostasy only inspires more teaching. Departure from truth affected Paul deeply. So disturbed was he by the Galatian apostasy that he declined the services of Tertius, his scribe, and sat down to write the Galatians himself with large letters! (Galatians 5:11).

What bothered Paul the most was the subtle distortion of truth. The Galatians believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they reckoned His sacrifice as insufficient. They had undertaken their new walk in Spirit, but imagined they would complete it in flesh, looking to the Law of Moses to seal their justification. Paul, hearing of this, was beside himself.

"The evangel which is being brought by me," said Paul, "is not in accord with man." Of course it wasn't. What man would ever bring a message that makes all men sinners and wanting of the glory of God? What man would disclaim any possible human solution to the problem of sin? An evangel in accord with man would include a ten-step program and a diploma. According to Paul, man's contribution to the evangel is to be the object of God's complete work. Man provides the helplessness from which God rescues him. It is this lack of human contribution that distinguishes Paul's message from every religion on earth.

"For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it." When Christ appeared to Paul, He did not send him to Peter or any of the twelve for finishing school. Rather, Paul's education "came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

In Acts 26:16, Paul relates the story of his conversion to Agrippa.

The Lord said, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet, for I was seen by you for this, to fix upon you before for a deputy and a witness both of what you have perceived and that in which I will be seen by you."

Paul's meeting with Christ on the Damascus road was a preliminary step only. "I was seen by you," said the risen Lord, "and I will be seen by you." The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Paul on multiple occasions. In other words, Paul enjoyed personal, intimate discourse with the Savior of the world. Christ taught him Himself; imagine that. On one occasion, the lesson included a snatching away to the third heaven (c.f. II Corinthians 12:2).

PAUL'S INDEPENDENT MINISTRY

Now, when it delights God, Who severs me from my mother's womb and calls me through His grace, **to unveil His Son in me** that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations, I did not immediately submit it to flesh and blood, neither came I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I came away into Arabia, and I return again to Damascus. Thereupon, after three years, I came up to Jerusalem to relate my story to Cephas, and I stay with him fifteen days. Yet I became acquainted with no one different from the apostles, except James, the brother of the Lord. Now what I am writing to you, lo! in God's sight, I say that I am not lying. Thereupon I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Yet I was unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea which are in Christ. Yet only they were hearing that "He who once was persecuting us, now is evangelizing the faith which once he ravaged." And they glorified God in me (Galatians 1:15-24).

Note the phrase, "to unveil His Son in me." What does it mean to unveil something? It means "to take off the cover." Paul unveiled more about God's Son than anyone before him or since. Peter and Paul believed in the same Jesus, but Paul revealed glories unknown to Peter, John, David, Isaiah and every other divine penman. We of the nations are only acquainted with our celestial in-

heritance through Paul. We can only know Christ's greatest glories and accomplishments through Paul. Before Paul, God's inspired writers revealed Christ as Messiah, King and High Priest – all roles related to Israel. Through Paul's revelation, we see much more. We see Christ as Head over the ecclesia which is His Body, and ultimately as Head over all. Through Paul's revelation, we see the full scope of Christ's accomplishment on Calvary. In Ephesians chapter three Paul calls this, "*the secret of the Christ.*"

Paul did **NOT** immediately submit his revelation to flesh and blood. He did not go to Peter one day and ask, "Did I hear this right?" When Paul writes his letter to the Galatians, he does not begin by saying what he *did*. Rather, he said what he *did not do*. What he *did not do* is of vital importance to us! He did *not* go to Peter.

NEITHER did he go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him. Jerusalem was the center of Judaism and the Law of Moses. It was the center of the only religion God gave to man. As such, it was a place most unsuitable to the new revelation.

In Acts chapter 13 the new evangel and its administrators are centered in Antioch. "Anti" means "instead of," and "och" means "have." The verb "uphold" has the same elements. With Paul's conversion, God's proclamations now go forth from here through Paul, *instead* of from Jerusalem through Peter. Antioch is "*upheld* as the base of Paul's evangel to the Gentiles, while the Jerusalem ecclesia is eventually dispersed."²

If Paul was the nations' Moses, then Antioch became their Jerusalem.

Luke wrote his account of the Lord's earthly ministry and the book of Acts for the sake of a man named Theophilus, who may have come to question Paul's apostleship because he was in prison and the whole of Asia had turned against him. The two accounts form a unit. Here is how Luke starts Acts: "*The first account, indeed, I make, O Theophilus, concerning all which Jesus begins both to do and to teach, until the day on which He was taken up*" (Acts 1:1-2).

So Luke's first account is about all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Note the word "*began.*"

So what is Acts about? It is about what the same Christ presented in the first account was continuing to teach. The same Jesus was working in Acts 2 with Peter, and the same Jesus was working with Paul in Acts 13. This shows that Paul's ministry is just as much in tune with God's purposes as our Lord's earthly ministry and that of the twelve.

Jerusalem had the divine religion, and out of Jerusalem the law will go forth in the millennium. That is still God's chosen place, and His purpose for the earth will be centered there. Yet, with Paul we have a transfer and a segregation of time. Paul says, "***BUT I came away into Arabia.***" That was the same place Moses had been. What was Moses doing there? Getting the law. What was Paul doing there? Getting a revelation of the evangel of the grace of God.

Paul did *not* go to those in Jerusalem, *but* he went away to learn the truth for the nations. In Acts 2:42 Luke writes about those of the Circumcision and the twelve apostles. They were in Jerusalem, persevering in the teaching of the apostles. However, Paul was *not* doing this, for he did not get his teaching in Jerusalem.

God was working in Paul as He worked in Peter, and the message both brought concerned the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Paul did *not* get his apostleship from men, *neither* through a man; *but* it came through Jesus Christ. Paul did *not* bring an evangel in accord with man, *neither* did he accept it from a man, *but* it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul did *not* immediately submit the revelation he received to flesh and blood, *neither* did he go to Jerusalem; *but* he went to Arabia.

Now, if Paul's message was the same as Peter's, he sure took pains to point out that it wasn't. For us to point out Paul pointing this out is the great burden of this era. Here and now, there are many who will perish for the eons for a lack of a knowledge of Paul's evangel. Let us therefore preserve the purity of Paul's message, and herald it boldly, that they may believe, whoever are set for life eonian.

2. A.E. Knoch, *Concordant Commentary*, p. 197.

Is God in Everything?

Blades of Grass to Galaxies

by – Dan Sheridan

In the first book of the Sacred Scriptures in the first chapter, Genesis 1 (or more accurately “In the Beginning” chapter 1), Elohim (God) deals with blades of grass on the third day, and then, on the fourth day He deals with galaxies. From Elohim’s perspective, there was no difference. He is Elohim of the stars and the blades of grass, He is Elohim of elephants and dust mites.

Every detail of our God’s creation is part of a great poem, it has meaning and harmony. God uses every detail, every gust of wind, every rain fall, each breath of a man’s life, every word spoken, to complete this great poem. He keeps track of the hairs of your head and the tears that we shed. He could tell Gideon the age of one of his animals, take every fly and locust out of Egypt, and arrange the events of history so that Christ would be crucified on the very day He determined. There is not one detail that is not important.

The goal universal is God’s glory. From the tiniest insect in its aimless seeming way, to the most sovereign sun star in its parabolic path, all have one common aim, one pure purpose to perform. Men may deem the one (i.e., the insect) a foolish, fruitless wondering; they cannot tell the star’s objective; but our God has harnessed both to His chariot of glory.

Why should we drag God down to the level of a human just because we can’t comprehend this great truth? Instead of questioning such truth, should we not rather believe it? This will not make us fatalistic, but rather, it will give the details of our life an aura of glory, and give us encouragement as we do the mundane. For, after all, the mundane is God’s business. Yes, our God is in the details, and our calling is in the details of life. We never have to worry, God has not lost control of His universe, He is not reacting to His creation, and He is not running around putting out fires like the gods of the heathen. So, go out and live! ■



I want to share with you about your book *The Outsiders*. I have been reading it and it sure has been ministering to my heart. The other morning Father woke me up and was moving on my heart about 4:30 in the morning. I laid there and wept for awhile. I then felt moved to get up and do some more reading in your book, when who I am became very real to me! I am the church! I am so excited and then I cried some more and was so overwhelmed by His Love! – **PA**

I really enjoy your *Daily Email Goodies*. More so than anything else, each day I really look forward

to your emails. Thanks for everything you do! – **MD**

Thank you so much for the books, I have not stopped studying for days now ... Always loved Bullinger, I have had the Companion Bible for many years now, and I have known about the Ultimate Salvation for All since I was a child. But since then have gotten trapped in Religion off and on, I am seeking true freedom! – **WA**

You never sugar-coat any issues ... and I am forever grateful for that. – **VT**

Thank you for the clarity and insight. Please don’t ever stop writing. Father is dealing with me through your gift of wisdom in the faith. – **LA**

Thank you for always reminding us of God’s goodness. – **TX**

(see **MAILBOX**, last page)

The Furnace of Affliction

by – J.R. Miller (1840-1912)

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Sooner or later, *affliction* and sorrow come to every Christian. We ought, therefore, to have *true views about pain*, about the divine reasons for sending it, and about the mission on which it comes. We ought to know, also, how to endure suffering so as to get from it the blessing which its hot hand brings to us.

The Scriptures show, at least, that *suffering is no accident in God's world* – but is one of His messengers; and that it comes not as an *enemy*, but as a *friend* on an errand of blessing. The design of God, in all of the afflictions which He sends upon His people – is necessary in preparing us for heavenly glory.

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Tribulation is *God's threshing*, not to harm us or to destroy us, but to separate what is heavenly in us from what is earthly. His puts us in the *fire of purification*, until His Own image shines reflected in the gold! His *prunings* mean greater *fruitfulness*. In whatever form

the suffering comes, *the purpose of the pain* is merciful. In all of our life in this world, God is purifying us – and suffering is one of the chief agents which He employs.

We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope (Romans 5:3-4).

Afflictions must be received as *God's messengers*. They often come in very somber garb, and it is only when we receive them in faith that they disclose to us their merciful aspect and mission.

We should therefore receive afflictions reverently, as sent from God. We may be assured that there is always some blessing for us in *pain's hot hand*. There is some *golden fruit* wrapped up in the *rough husk*. God designs to burn off some sins from us in every fire through which He calls us to pass.

Living Without Worry

On Thy Potter's Wheel

George MacDonald

Remember, Lord, Thou hast not made
me good.
Or if Thou didst, it was so long ago
I have forgotten – and never
understood,
I humbly think. At best it was a crude,
A rough-hewn goodness, that did need
this woe,
This sin, these harms of all kinds fierce
and rude.
To shape it out, making it live and grow.

But Thou art making me, I thank Thee, Sire.
What Thou hast done and doest Thou
know'st well,
And I will help Thee: gently in the fire
I will lie burning; on Thy potter's wheel
I will whirl patient, though my brain
should reel.
Thy grace shall be enough the grief to
quell,
And growing strength perfect through
weakness dire.

Diary of an Old Soul

MAILBOX (continued from page 2362)

I am very excited to be on the path to the truth ... It seems that the closer I get to the truth the more "problems" occur in my life ... I realize everything is in God's Plan, if I understand it or not ... I am so excited every day at what God has in store for me. It is like opening a box of Cracker Jacks each day, sometimes the prize is great and sometimes it kinda stinks, but the act of opening the box is the best part! I look forward to each joy, each trial and each tribulation that God blesses me with! - **PA**

I have a special place on my computer for the email goodies that I know I have to keep because they were so good. Thank you again for your inspiration to me, I know the Father sent you to me to open my eyes to the truth of His Word. - **CO**

There is a SPECIFIC MESSAGE that we are to be heralding. One does not hear this too often, but it can't be overstated. The details of Paul's gospel are vitally important. Thank you for being one of the faithful men. - **OH**

You're doing a wonderful job! - **NC**

Love your *Daily Email Goodies*, Clyde. They are one of the high points of my day. - **AR**

I must say I am really enjoying your *Daily Email Goodies*. A quick glance over at your sites, blogs, notebooks and books just makes me revel: how many hours does your day have?

As a recent believer in God's plans to save ALL, I am studying like crazy and I share my findings on my weblog (goswindeboer.nl). And that is why I am writing you: can I translate and quote some of your excellent daily writ? I am Dutch and I want to speak Dutch to my readers when possible ...

Thanks for sharing the wealth of knowledge and insight you have with the world. Writings like yours keep me smiling all day! - **The Netherlands**

I have looked at some of your posts and writings. I am JUST STUNNED at what you say ... although in a GOOD way!

I have rarely come across someone who uses the term "Gospel of the Uncircumcision" or who boldly speaks of two Gospels (although Scripture does!).

It is refreshing. - **OK**

I just finished reading "The 'MANY' and the 'ALL.'" Thank you brother! After 20 years of study this subject is finally perfectly clear! Thanks to Father for giving you such a way with words! - **LA**

Thank you for the *Daily Email Goodies*. I have learned much from them - especially the fact that certain books were written to Israel and the rest being for another chosen people that the apostle Paul taught - for the Gentiles. - **WA**

I just want to take a moment to thank you for being such a great herald of the really good news. I always look forward to receiving my *Daily Email Goodies*. They have been sweet to my palate. I have been able to see the differences between the Old Testament and the Good News of Paul for about seven years now. However, I had not seen through the "churches" Pentecost teachings until reading your recent messages. They have truly been an eye opener for me ... I want to continue encouraging you in these endeavors. Please keep up the good works. - **MD**

I will share with you what I am doing with your *Daily Email Goodies*. I am printing them and putting them in a notebook, indexing them by topic. This gives me a ready reference on any topic with Scripture backup in a brief form ... I find it impossible to remember strings of Scripture pertinent to a given subject. Now when the occasion arises for discussions, I no longer have to speak in generalities, but can be specific! This is a wonderful Blessing for me and I only have Father to thank for it - through you!!!! How humbling it must be for you to have Father work through you the way He does!! The more I read from you at Study Shelf, the better I know you and the closer I feel to you, and the Father and Son that you love so sincerely and deeply. - **LA**

I look forward to your e-mail goodies every day and have read some of your books ... Your writings are so great and easy for me to understand ... Thanks for the Email goodies, they are a permanent part of my day and your writings have so helped me in my journey of loving and understanding the Lord. I love knowing how wonderful and loving my God is and that no one will send us to hell for all of eternity. - **CO**