

Defends Apostleship

Argument 1 - 1:12, 13

GAL 1:11 For I would have you know, brethren [brothers], that the gospel [good news] which was preached by me is not according to man.

- NIV “is not something that man made up.”
 - NRSV “ is not of human origin”
 - Amp. “is not man’s gospel.”
1. His message was from God, and it had been taught him by God.
 2. This was true of the other apostles. (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 2:4).

GAL 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a [direct] revelation of Jesus Christ.

- “revelation” (apokalupsis). The verb form is “apokalupto” meaning “to reveal, discourse.”
1. This was done after the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus.
 2. The exact time of the revelation [instruction] is not known.
 3. It likely began when Jesus first appeared to him on the road to Damascus and was revealed to him over a period of time.

Argument 2

GAL 1:13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it;

1. Paul had unmercifully persecuted the church. (Acts 8:1; 9:1, 2; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13).
2. He nor any other man could destroy it. (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18, 19).
3. No one can destroy it today, but certainly many have done damage to it by their teachings and conduct.

GAL 1:14 and I was advancing in Judaism [law and traditions] beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

- “patrikos” - ancestral, father
1. His education in Judaism was not responsible for his teaching of grace.

2. Christ was responsible for his message.

Argument 3

GAL 1:15 But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased

1. God had set Paul apart to be an apostle even from his birth. (Isa. 49:1; Jere. 1:5; Lk. 1:5).
2. This did not guarantee his salvation. (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Heb. 3:12).

1CO 9:27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

1CO 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

HEB 3:12 Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.

3. Paul recognized he did not deserve this honor, but it was “through His grace.”
 - a. He had been “the chief of sinners.” (1 Tim. 1:15, 16).

1TI 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1TI 1:16 And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

- b. Paul deserved condemnation, but he “found mercy” as an example that all can be saved who will by faith accept the grace of God manifested in Jesus Christ.

GAL 1:16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

- See Acts 26:16-18; 9:15.

1. The point Paul is making is that he was not taught by the apostles or any other human.
2. His knowledge was by revelation of Jesus Christ.
3. The promise given to the twelve applied to Paul and all apostles. (Jn. 16:13).

JOH 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

Arabia

GAL 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me [the twelve]; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus [south of Arabia].

1. See Acts 9

2. This appears to be the sequence of the events in Paul's conversion.

- a. He was converted on the way to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-19a).
- b. He was in Damascus briefly. (Acts 9:19b-22).

ACT 9:19 Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." 21 And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

- During his stay in Damascus he went to Arabia and returned to Damascus (Gal. 1:17). Luke does not record this trip in Acts.
 - Galatians 1:17 "Arabia" could mean desert region of Damascus reaching to Euphrates or possibly the Sinai region. He was in seclusion in Arabia. (Gal. 1:17).
- c. He returned to Damascus for some time. (Acts 9:23).

ACT 9:23 And when many days [three years] had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him,

- d. He escaped to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor.11:32,33).

ACT 9:23 And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. And they were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; 25 but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

2CO 11:32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

- f. He met with some of the apostles. (Acts 9:26-28; Gal. 1:18,19).
- g. He departed for Syria and Cilicia. (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21).

GAL 1:18 Then three years later [after his conversion] I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. Acts 9:26, 27

- "historeo" - to visit, get to know

ACT 9:23 And when **many days** [three years] had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him,

- "many days" was 3 years. (Gal. 1:18). See Josh. 24:27; Job 14:1;
- The time period may not have been 3 full years. Some think it might have been one full year and two partial years.

- This “three years” dates back to the time of his conversion on the road to Damascus, about 36 A.D..

1. He saw “Cephas” but not the whole group of the apostles.
2. He was with him only “fifteen days” and such a short visit could not make or explain the apostle Paul.

GAL 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

1. The only apostles he saw was “Cephas” and “James, the Lord’s brother.” (Lk. 2:7; Matt. 1:25; Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).
2. We learn here that James became an apostle.
 - a. He was not among the twelve. (Acts 1:21, 22).
 - b. He was a pillar in the church. (Gal. 2:9).
 - c. He was the leader of the Jerusalem conference held about A.D. 50. See Acts 15.
 - d. It is not known when he became an apostle. It was later than Acts 2.
 - e. It was likely early in the history of the church since he was regarded as a pillar in the church A.D. 50..

GAL 1:20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)

1. Some challenged the veracity of Paul.
2. He swears he is telling the truth.
3. The twelve never denied Paul’s affirmation he was not taught by the apostles.
4. They knew they had taught him.

GAL 1:21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia [that is, the province of Asia Minor].

GAL 1:22 And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea [outside of Jerusalem] **which were in Christ;**

1. He had had very little contact with “the churches of Judea.”
2. He had spent some time in Jerusalem. (Gal. 1:18).

GAL 1:23 but only, they [the churches of Judea] **kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."**

1. Paul had been a fierce persecutor of the church. (Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1; Acts 9).
2. “Preaching the faith” is preaching the gospel.

3. See Notes on Galatians 1:6.

GAL 1:24 And they [the churches of Judea] were glorifying God because of me [my conversion and work].

1. Paul had been a fierce enemy of Christianity, but had become one of its greatest advocates and defender.
2. It is no wonder that God was being glorified because of him.
3. He led multitudes to Christ, and wrote a large portion of the New Testament.

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