

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Part Three Historical Section

III. Paul's Apostolic Authority Chapter 1:11-24; 2:1-14

A. Paul's authority is witnessed to by the way in which he received the Gospel

1. The fact stated: Paul received the Gospel by direct revelation from God. (Chapter 1, verses 11, 12)

2. The fact illustrated (Chapter 1, verses 13-24:)

a. by the nature of his former life (verses 13-16)

(1) His former convictions were directly opposite from what he now preached. It was only through his miraculous conversion that he came to understand the true Gospel.

b. by his lack of contact with the other apostles

(1) sojourn in Arabia (verses 16b-17)

(a) He "conferred not with flesh and blood." Like Moses, Elijah, and Christ Himself, Paul went into a desolate place where he could confer with God alone.

(2) his first visit to Jerusalem

(a) He stayed in Peter's house and got acquainted with him. He also met James, the chief elder of the Jerusalem church. His visit was brief, 15 days.

(The verb translated "to visit" means to visit "in order to get acquainted with," not "to inquire of." Paul was not having an audience with the Pope, he simply wanted to get to know the other apostles. Also, his first visit with the other apostles occurred three years after his conversion. The fact that he did not seek them out before this shows that he did not receive the Gospel from them. Compare Acts 9:27-30, the parallel account.)

(3) his stay in Syria and Cilicia

(a) The fact that he was unknown by the Christians in Judea, except by his testimony, shows that he was out of contact with the center of apostolic activity. We know very little about his stay in Syria and Cilicia. He evidently spent quite some time in his hometown of Tarsus. In Acts 9:30 Paul leaves for Tarsus. In Acts 11:25 Barnabas leaves for Tarsus to seek Paul. They spent one year working in Antioch which is in Syria. Paul stayed in Tarsus approximately eight years. There is no record of his activity there. Evidently it was a time of waiting on God in preparation for the great missionary activity.

c. by his testimony in the churches of Judea

(1) There were no suspicions in these churches concerning Paul's apostleship. The Christians had heard of the miraculous conversion of the one-time persecutor of the church and they glorified God for this miracle of His grace.

Conclusion under A: During the first fourteen years after Paul's conversion he had very little contact with the other apostles. How could it be said that he received his authority from these men?