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**A0946 – November 15, 2009 – Galatians 1:1-2 – Paul's Apostleship**

Alright, last time we introduced the background of Galatians. We said it was written by Paul in the stage of infancy. The church in the Book of Acts moves from immaturity to maturity. There are seven transitions in the Book of Acts and the transition from immaturity to maturity can be seen in three phases, infancy...childhood...adulthood and Paul's thirteen epistles arrange nicely in these three categories. Galatians is in the infancy phase meaning it contains basic Christian doctrine, milk doctrine. So in this book we're emphasizing basics, milk. All infants need milk to grow and all new Christians need basic Christian doctrine to grow and so Paul's first epistle is basic Christian doctrine. And the basic doctrine Galatians teaches is the doctrine of justification, how a man is made right with God, how a man is set free from the penalty of sin. That is Paul's pre-eminent concern. If we're not even clear on the gospel and how a man is saved then what are we doing talking about the rest of it? The second basic is the doctrine of experiential sanctification, how a person once justified can grow spiritually, how he is set free from the power of sin in his life. These are the two basic themes of Galatians.

Now hopefully you have read through the text of Galatians last week because my teaching presupposes that you are familiar with the text. My study is in the original text and I'll be referring to the original text quite often so you'll want to be reading Galatians each week to familiarize yourself with the overall argument. The details of the text I'll point out as we go along. I'll be doing more of this in Galatians than in Acts as Acts was a book of history so I emphasized history. Galatians is a book of doctrine so I'll emphasize the grammar; the grammar has nuances that impact our doctrine.

Today we look at Gal 1:1-2 and the question of Paul's apostleship. Paul's apostleship was a controversial issue in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and it's a

controversial issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Several verses in chapter 1 and 2 are Paul defending his apostleship. And we want to ask why? Why is Paul going to such lengths to defend his apostleship? And what apostleship is Paul defending? Is he an apostle of man or is he an apostle of God? The answer to that question is crucial to the gospel of justification by faith. If Paul is merely an apostle of man then Paul's authority is no greater than man. But if he is an apostle of God then His authority is greater than man. So Paul's apostleship is a major issue in the first two chapters and it simply has to be handled because the validity of whatever he says about the gospel of justification by faith hinges on it completely. We'll also answer the question, "Was Paul one of the twelve apostles or not?" That's a point of debate and quite frankly, I thought it was basically a point that would just be debated forever and that ultimately it didn't matter too much but after this week's study the answer has become very clear to me and so we'll cover that under three or four points and for that we'll have to do a lot of flipping around in the NT. So let's read our text today, Gal 1:1-2

***Gal 1:1-2 Paulos apostolos, ouk ap anthropon oude di anthropou alla dia Iesou Christou kai theou patros tou egeirantos auton ek nekron, <sup>2</sup>kai oi sun emoi pantes adelphoi, tais ekklesiais tes Galatias. (NA27)***

***Gal 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle (neither from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who has raised Him from the deaths), <sup>2</sup>and all the brethren with me, to the churches of the Galatias. (Author's Translation)***

***Gal 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), <sup>2</sup>and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: (NASB95)***

Now the sentence begins, **Paul, an apostle**. And then he parenthetically defends his apostleship. It's a complete thought so let's handle that thought then we'll come back to the details of the parenthetical. If we leave out the parenthetical defense it reads like this: **Paul, an apostle...and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia**. Now that's telling you two things. First, Paul isn't the only one in the world who holds to the doctrine of justification by faith and sanctification by the Spirit. The doctrines of this letter are held by **Paul and all the brethren with him**. Who are the brethren with Paul? They're the brethren at Antioch in Syria. It

is in modern Syria right on the Orontes River. Antioch was the center of Gentile Christianity. This is where the disciples were first called Christians. And we know from Acts 13:1 that there were a number of strong Jewish Bible teachers and prophets in Antioch. Luke names them: Barnabas, Simeon, Niger, Lucius and Manaen. So we'd say the **brethren** here refer to at least those six guys and of course the rest of the believers in Antioch when he wrote Galatians.

Second, **Paul** is **an apostle** but the **brethren** are not. So **Paul** is like them in one sense, but he's unlike them in another sense. Paul in one sense is like you and me and all believers in Christ. He's a fellow believer and in that sense we are all justified, we are all regenerated, we are all indwelt by the Spirit, we are all baptized into the body of Christ, we are all eternally secure and so forth. We all share equal status in Christ. But not all believers are apostles. Paul is **an apostle**.

Now in the parenthetical, Paul defends his apostleship by saying, **(not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)**. Let's go through what this is teaching and then we'll come back and defend some of the ideas. First he says I'm an apostle but **not sent from men**. You could be an apostle sent from men in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, there are passages that refer to apostles sent from men. Paul says I'm not one of those. Here's what it says in the original text, *ouk ap anthropon*. The preposition *ap* means "from" and refers to source *anthropon* is in the plural so it's **men**. So this first phrase - not sent from men - means my apostleship is not sourced in men. That's very important because Paul's trying to answer the question of source since that's tied in with his authority. First it's not sourced in men. And come down to verse 16b to see what men he's referring to in this statement. "I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood," that's men, verse 17, "nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me." The other apostles are men. So Paul says I was not sent from these guys.

Second he says, **nor through the agency of man** and this uses a different preposition, *dia* and *dia* means "through" and here he says it's not through a man. Man is singular here. So his point is that there was no indirect agent, no man came in between me and the source of my apostleship. I got it directly. And if you come down to verse 11 you get explanation of this phrase.

“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup>For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.” So his point is that it came to him directly from Jesus Christ, there was no intermediate human agent. Paul was a direct recipient of revelation.

And then he uses the contrasting conjunction *alla* to set off who it was who sent him as an apostle from men. So he says I didn’t get it from men **but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead**. The first thing you want to observe about the source of Paul’s apostleship is that it is two persons; **Jesus Christ and God the Father**. Now you may be tempted to say, well, God the Father is the source and Jesus Christ is the intermediate agent. Not so, both Jesus Christ and God the Father are controlled by the same preposition *dia*. Therefore the only thing you can conclude is that these Jesus Christ and God the Father are equal in status; two persons equal in status. Just like Paul was equal in status with the brethren of verse 2 so Jesus Christ is equal in status to God the Father. There’s not a particle of difference. So Paul’s point is that his apostleship comes from the first two members of the Trinity.

Then the end of the verse **Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead**, so God the Father raised Jesus Christ **from the dead** and that means that not only is Jesus Christ equal to God the Father in status but He’s also a man. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of man and since He Himself had no sin God the Father raised Him from the dead. And so we have the fact that Jesus Christ is God and man, we call that the Hypostatic Union.

Then if you translate this correctly it actually says deaths plural, not dead. God the Father raised Jesus Christ **from the deaths**. And that’s because Jesus Christ died multiple deaths on the cross. He at least died a spiritual death and a physical death. The physical death is a result of the spiritual death. He didn’t die for his own sins. Our sins were imputed to Him and so He died a spiritual death by imputation for our sins and as a consequence He died a physical death and so when God the Father raised Him **out of the deaths** He has two lives to give all who believe. Spiritual life, that’s your regeneration, is what the Bible calls born again; that life is imparted to you at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone. And second, physical life, that’s

your resurrection, that new body is imparted to you on the day of resurrection.

So with all that said v 1 contains four doctrines minimally: the doctrine of apostle, the doctrine of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the hypostatic union of Christ and the doctrine of resurrection. Paul was a theological genius and he could easily cram five or six theological concepts into a few words. So verse 1 contains four very important doctrines. We want to look at two of them, the deity of Christ and the apostleship of Paul.

Now the deity of Christ in verse 1 we have to discuss because this basic truth has been attacked by most of the so-called Christian cults like Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. They will go so far as to say Jesus Christ is "a god" but not "the God." For them bible study is an attempt to get rid of the co-equal status Jesus Christ with God the Father. Now you should know that these cults have been around since the early centuries of the Church under different names. Arius promoted this heresy in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and it was condemned at the Council of Nicea, AD325 and ever since then the same heresy keeps cropping up. Jehovah's Witness is nothing new, it's just the same old Arian heresy. So, you see the deity of Christ in verse 1 because Jesus Christ is set off from men by a contrasting conjunction and He's put with God the Father. So that puts Jesus Christ in the same category with God the Father. You can't link Jesus Christ that close to God the Father and say they're different in substance, you just can't do that. Now come down to verse 12 again and see if you don't see the deity of Christ again. Paul says, "For I did not receive it from any man...but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Now if Jesus Christ was just a man then Paul couldn't say that. And if Jesus Christ isn't a man then the only alternative is God. Not a half God, half man monster. So v 1, verse 12, this is some of the evidence of the deity of Christ that people say is so lacking in the bible. It's not lacking, people aren't looking. So let's look in some other places.

Turn to Tit 2:13. We'll go through a few stock verses on the deity of Christ. Remember in Acts where Paul gave his defense before Herod Agrippa II and Bernice, brother and sister in arms, a sick display? Paul did what early Christians did. They had put together a list of common misconceptions, common questions and someone would say, "Is the Messiah to suffer?" And they'd start reeling of verses from the OT that said, yes, the Messiah is to

suffer. Then they'd ask, "Is the Messiah to rise from the dead?" And then they'd reel off verses from the OT that said, yes, the Messiah is to rise from the dead. And here we're doing the same thing with the NT except we're asking the question, "Is the Messiah God?" Answer, Tit 2:13, let's start in v 11, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, <sup>12</sup>instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup>looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." Notice the closing expression of v 13, "our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." The structure in the original text is called the Granville-Sharp construction and it looks like this: when you have the definite article followed by two singular nouns separated by "and" then the two nouns both modify the same object. And so what that is saying is that "great God and Savior" both apply to Christ Jesus. It couldn't be any clearer from the original text that Titus is saying Jesus is God. Tit 2:13 clearly teaches the deity of Christ.

Now turn to 2 Pet 1:1. Here's another one that follows Sharp's rule. "Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:" There it is again, same construction, definite article followed by two singular nouns separated by the conjunction and modifying Jesus Christ. The deity of Christ is clear.

Finally turn to Heb 1:8, these are verses you should have memorized and have in your repertoire. "But of the Son *He says*, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER," Alright, that's a quote from the OT. Who is the Son? Jesus Christ is the Son. And what does he say of the Son? "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER," so there it is as clear as you can get, the Son is God. If you want others jot down 1 John 5:20, John 1:1 and 14 and 18. Try on a comparison of Rom 10:9 and 10:13. In 10:9 Jesus is called Lord and in 10:13 God is called Lord so it's obvious that Jesus is God. There are others but this should get you started.

Now having seen that Paul's apostleship is not sourced in men, nor did he receive it indirectly through a man but he got it through Jesus Christ and God the Father who are co-equal members of the Trinity we want to ask a question. Why does Paul have to defend his apostleship? Why, in the salutation of the letter, does he break from his normal salutation and put this

parenthetical in there? Because Paul is not one of the twelve apostles. Now that may shock you. There's always the debate over who is the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle? Is it Paul or Matthias? We'll deal with that argument in a while. But just for now recognize that there were groups of people in the 1<sup>st</sup> century that said Paul is not one of the twelve apostles and therefore Paul has no authority. That's the background of verse 1. Now who was saying this? Who was saying Paul wasn't one of the twelve apostles?

Turn to Acts 15 to see some of the type. We're always going back to Acts because Acts is the historical background of Galatians. In Acts 15 we meet a couple of groups that were stirring up trouble. It was their doctrine that stirred up the trouble and led to the first church council. Here's the first group in v 1, "Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren," now they're coming to Antioch from Judea, the area around Jerusalem and look what they taught: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." Now we don't know if the men in verse 1 are personally saved or not but they were teaching that circumcision was necessary to be saved. Come down to verse 5, here's the second group. "But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses." So these men are saved and it shows you that whether you're a believer or an unbeliever you can carry a false gospel. Just because you're saved by the true gospel doesn't mean you can't depart from it later. Here's some from the sect of the Pharisees that did depart. Now whether this is one group of Jews or two groups, in either case they're teaching the same doctrine - that Gentiles need to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses, it's necessary for salvation. Whether they're personally saved or not, it makes no difference in the point we're making. We'll just call them Judaizers and a Judaizer is someone who says doing works of the Law of Moses is necessary for salvation. And so you have these groups of Judaizers roaming about in the Roman Empire and they were going into these churches Paul established and teaching a false gospel and part of the program to get these Gentiles to comply with the Law of Moses was to undermine Paul's apostleship. They have to; they have to undermine Paul's authority.

So the Judaizers are the one's who questioned Paul's apostleship in Gal 1:1 and that's why he's going into this defense. He's going to argue in 1:17-24 and in 2:8 for his apostleship, he's going to expand on what we've done. And I ask

you, is that really necessary if he's one of the twelve? Why doesn't he just say, I'm of the twelve, end of argument. Well, he can't do that because he's not of the twelve. You watch the NT. Do you realize how many verses are devoted to Paul defending his apostleship? 132 verses. That's more than the virgin birth, that's more than the deity of Christ, that's far more than the Trinity. Do you realize the significance of that? That's about 5 chapters of the NT devoted to defending Paul's apostleship. Guess how many verses Peter defends his apostleship. Zero. Absolutely zero. How many verses does John defend his apostleship? Absolutely zero. Why? Because everybody knew they were of the twelve. Nobody challenged their apostleship. But Paul, Paul's not of the twelve and Paul has some pretty big things to say. He wrote 13 NT epistles so Paul becomes the point of attack. Think about it. Here's another question to ask. If Paul is one of the twelve apostles then why did Luke record in Acts 1 that Matthias was chosen as the twelfth apostle. Paul helped Luke write about 20 of the 28 chapters in Acts. Don't you think Paul knew about Acts 1 before Luke finished it? Sure he did. Why didn't Luke, who is a pre-eminent historian, say anywhere in his book that Matthias was chosen but the real twelfth apostle was Paul?

So let's look at Paul's apostleship and apostleship in general under four main points. We'll look at the definition, qualifications; their authentication and their function. Then we can answer questions about modern claims of apostleship. First the definition. The word in the original Greek is *apostolos*, it looks like this: a-p-o-s-t-o-l-o-s. It has two aspects to its meaning. One it just means "one sent, a messenger" and two it means "in the full authority of the sender." I don't know if you caught that but listen closely. An apostle is "one sent in the full authority of the sender." In the ancient world the nations had kings and the king would have his court and he had all kinds of servants in his court. Some of the servants were apostles, messengers; they relayed the king's messages to various rulers in the kingdom or they travelled to foreign kingdoms and delivered messages to foreign kings. So say you're an apostle in the Babylonian kingdom and the king wants to send a message to the king of the Assyrian kingdom and so he sends you out. You go before the Assyrian king and when you walk into the Assyrian court with the message from the Babylonian king, you are the Babylonian king and you better be treated like the Babylonian king would be treated because you have the full authority vested in you. Now there's no difference if the actual king was standing there than if you, his messenger, was standing there. That's what people have got



to understand about Paul's writings. Paul's not just some guy. Paul's words in Galatians aren't Paul's words. That's the argument he's making. These are the words of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. That's verse 1.

Second, what are the qualifications for being an apostle? Well, it depends on what category of apostle you're talking about. First you had the twelve and then you had others. For the qualifications for the first category, the twelve, turn to Acts 1:21-23. Now there's a lot going on in this passage. Judas Iscariot is obviously no longer one of the twelve, he's hung himself. So there's a vacancy in the office and in verse 20 Peter quotes from Ps 69 and 109 and the way he understood these Psalms is that the apostolic office would have a vacancy and it was their job to fill the vacancy, that's why they say in verse 21, "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—<sup>22</sup>beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection." So verses 21-22 narrow the choices down, whoever is chosen has to have been with Christ; His entire ministry beginning with His baptism all the way to His ascension. Verse 23, "So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias." In verse 24 they pray, in verse 26 they draw lots and the lot falls to Matthias "and he was added to the eleven." Eleven and one makes twelve, there are the twelve. Turn to Acts 6:2. "So the" eleven "summoned the congregation..." is that what it says? No, "the twelve summoned the congregation and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables." When Paul happened along in Acts 9 they came and told Matthias, hey buddy, sorry, I know we went through the whole procedure in Acts 1, but really Paul is supposed to be in your slot. See ya. That doesn't make any sense. So we have the twelve and this group is a special group. Turn to 2 Cor 11:5 to see that the twelve are special. In fact they are given a title you may have never heard but in the original text Paul gives them a title, "For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles." Now where it says "most eminent apostles," actually the Greeks says "super apostles." The twelve are "super apostles." Paul is not saying he's a super apostle, if he was that's all he would have had to say, I'm a super apostle. But he doesn't say that does he? He says I'm not inferior to the super apostles. That's a statement of authority. We'll deal more with that later. Turn to 1 Cor 12:11. Here's Paul again, "Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the super apostles, even

though I am a nobody.” That tack on, I’m a nobody, is Paul’s humility and we’ll get to that. But there it is again, Paul’s not one of the super apostles; they’re a unique group and Paul’s not in the group. So let’s see the second category of apostle, the qualifications weren’t so stringent for this second group but they did have the same authority.

Turn to 1 Cor 9:1. Here are the qualifications. “Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” Right there. Having seen the resurrected Christ is required to be an apostle. Did Paul see the resurrected Christ? You bet he did! On the Damascus Road in Acts 9, and he saw Him in Corinth in Acts 18. He saw Him in the Temple in Jerusalem and he saw Him on the ship in Acts 27. So he meets this qualification. Turn to 1 Cor 15:8. Starting in verse 6, this is talking about Christ’s resurrection appearances, “After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; <sup>7</sup>then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; <sup>8</sup>and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.” I want to point out the phrase “and last of all, as to one untimely born,” that’s Acts 9 and what that does is put Paul’s apostleship years after the twelve’s apostleship. It separates him from that group. And further since the adjective “last” means last in time, then Paul’s saying that no new person ever saw the resurrected Christ after himself. You say well, John saw the resurrected Christ in AD96 when he wrote the Revelation, yeah, but he’d already seen him before. What this means is that no new unique individual saw Christ after Paul. Paul was the last unique person to see Christ and that has a lot to say about someone who claims to be an apostle today.

Alright, to be in category one, a super apostle, Acts 1, you’ve got to have been with Christ from His baptism by John to His ascension. For the second category you just had to see the risen Christ. Paul meets criteria for the second category not the first. But there are still other qualifications to be an apostle. You had to be chosen by God. And now you say, aha! in Acts 1 Matthias wasn’t chosen by God. They cast lots for Matthias, they were just playing a little game of chance. Oh no, no. Turn back to Acts 1:24. Remember we said they prayed to God. Here’s the prayer. “You Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside...” But you say, but still they drew lots, they rolled the dice, so obviously they weren’t

depending on the Lord. Question: What dispensation were they living in in Acts 1? The dispensation of the Law, they're not living in the dispensation of the Spirit. The Spirit doesn't come until Acts 2. And so how did they discern the will of God before the Spirit came in Acts 2? Turn to Prov 16:33. This is standard operating procedure for Jews during the dispensation of the Law. They had a number of ways to discern the will of God. This is one of them. Prov 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD." Now if lots were a divinely appointed method for discerning the will of God during the dispensation of the Law and they did this during the dispensation of the Law, who chose Matthias? God did. He made the decision. So there's not a problem at all. God chose Matthias in Acts 1 as the twelfth super-apostle and God chose Paul in Acts 9 as a true apostle. So that basically covers the qualifications for the two categories of apostle and puts Paul in the second category which explains why he always has to defend his apostleship. Everybody knew he wasn't one of the twelve.

Let's move on to the third thing: how was an apostle authenticated? There were tests for this kind of a thing, how to detect a true from a false apostle (Rev 2:2). By signs and wonders and miracles. Let's look at 2 Cor 12:12. We said in verse 11 Paul is not inferior to the super apostles but he himself is not a super apostle. Nevertheless, verse 12, he is a true apostle, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles." Did Paul do these signs of a super apostle? He sure did! Did Peter do these signs as a super-apostle? He sure did. In fact, look at this observation from the book of Acts. Put Paul's miracles and Peter's miracles side by side and what do you see? Peter in Acts 3:2ff heals a lame man; Paul in Acts 14:8 heals a lame man. Peter in Acts 5:16 exorcizes a demon; Paul in Acts 16:18 exorcizes a demon; Peter encounters and defeats a sorcerer in Acts 8:18ff; Paul encounters and defeats a sorcerer in Acts 13:6ff; Peter raises a dead girl from the dead in Acts 9:36ff; Paul raises a dead man in Acts 20:9ff; and finally, Peter escapes miraculously from prison in Acts 12:7ff and Paul escapes miraculously from prison in Acts 16:25ff. So our observation is that Paul, as a true apostle, was not inferior to the super apostle Peter. They had the exact same authority; they did the exact same miracles. Let me show you one more verse that shows this, Gal 2:8. Paul was not of the twelve but he had the same authority as the twelve, Gal 2:8 "for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles," so that shows equality of

apostleship in the sense of authority. Paul had equal authority because the one effectually working in him was the same one effectually working in Peter.

Alright we come to the fourth point: what was an apostle's function? For this turn to Eph 2:20. People are always complaining, why don't we have prophets today? Because they served their purpose in the first century. They accomplished their task for the body of Christ and that task no longer exists so they no longer exist. What was their task? To form the foundation of the Church. The Church has two phases, the foundational stage and the building stage. It's just like building a house. You put the foundation down first, you get it laid just right and then you start building on the foundation. It's a perfect analogy with the Church. Here it is in v 19. "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*," There it is: the function of the apostles and prophets is to form the foundation of the Church. Believers that come after the foundation was laid are built on the foundation, they aren't the foundation. The foundation was laid in the first century by the apostles and prophets. Since the foundation was poured then the building phase of the church took over.

Now let's sum up what we've said about Paul's apostleship. The NT records 132 verses where Paul defends his apostleship? Why? Very plainly. Because Paul was not the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle and everyone knew Paul was not the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle until someone came along in church history and said I think Paul was the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle. Now Paul never would have had to defend his apostleship if he was the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle. You never see Peter defending his apostleship. You never see John defending his apostleship. It was well known these guys were of the twelve. But Paul is in an odd position because he's a Johnny come lately. He didn't get his apostleship until Acts 9, he wasn't with Christ for the three years of His ministry, he wasn't there for the crucifixion, he wasn't there for the resurrection. Instead his story is he was a persecutor of the church, he murdered Christians. So obviously people questioned Paul. Then Paul saw the risen Christ on the Damascus Road. He believed, he was justified, and he went into the desert for about three years. We'll go through all this history later. But the point I want to make about Paul's apostleship, just from the verses in his own books, this is what the man said about his apostleship: I don't deserve to be an apostle but I am an apostle and I have

the full authority of one of the twelve apostles yet I am not one of the twelve apostles. That is the argument Paul makes. In Galatians he doesn't say anything about not deserving it but he does in other places.

Why is he so insistent on getting this across? Because he's got to establish his authority. The gospel is at stake here. If Paul was sent by men or by intermediate agency of man then his authority is nothing more than human opinion. But if he comes in the authority of God then it's God's word and you better perk up. The battle is always over source of authority and there are only two sources of ultimate authority; God and man. And Paul says I am of the first category when I speak, I speak with the authority of God.

So let me summarize verse 1, the intent of the original language: Paul, an apostle, the source of which is not men, nor the indirect agency of a man but through Jesus Christ who is God and God the Father, who raised Jesus Christ out of the spiritual and physical deaths that He died on our behalf.

Now if people would read this the way it's meant to be read it would solve a lot of problems in the Church. The first problem it would solve is this idiot idea of the red-letter Christian. A red-letter Christian says we're going to follow the red-letters of the gospels because that's what Jesus said and we just ditch the black letters because that's just what man said. In other words they've created a mini canon inside the true canon and when you do that it distorts the true canon. Why? Because it destroys context. Now if they really followed the red-letters the way they interpret them the whole problem would solve itself. They're always saying how Jesus was a radical and Jesus said if you lust after a woman pluck your eyeball out and if they followed that none of them would have eyeballs and then they couldn't see the red letters anymore. And it would be just as well because the black letters are just as much Christ's words as the red letters. Don't get into this kick: I'm just going to read what Jesus said and ditch Paul. Paul says I'm an apostle sent by Jesus Christ and therefore when I speak these words I speak with the full authority of Jesus Christ who is God and therefore every word in Galatians is the word of God just as much as the red-letters. So don't buy into the radical agenda of the liberal red-letter Christian.

A second problem this would solve is the modern day claim to be an apostle. Now look what they'd have to be saying. The modern apostle must be saying

that the words he says are the very words of God and so now we have verbal revelation ongoing. One problem with that. You're not writing Scripture. If you're getting revelation directly from God then why aren't you writing it down? Why don't we have the 67<sup>th</sup> book of the NT?

Now it's ridiculous to claim that you're an apostle today and let me show you why. First, how many people on planet earth today meet the criteria of Acts 1:21-23? How many people today were with Christ during his whole ministry in the 1<sup>st</sup> century? Zero. So nobody today is of the first category of super apostles. Second, how many people today have seen Jesus Christ in His resurrection body? Paul says he was the last one in time as a unique person to see Christ. Therefore zero. Third, how many people today were "chosen by God" to be an apostle? Zero. Fourth, are we twenty centuries later still living in the foundational phase of the church? No. We are in the building phase of the Church, Eph 2:20. Fifth, if you're an apostle why aren't you writing Scripture? Apostles received direct revelation so why aren't you writing Scripture? Where is the 67<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible? Sixth. Could you just show me one Gentile apostle anywhere in the word of God? They were all Jews.

Now one day we will have the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle issue resolved. Every person in this room that's a believer will have this issue solved for them in the Millennial Kingdom because Christ said in Matt 19:28 that the twelve would sit on twelve thrones and judge the nation Israel. So we'll all see one day either Matthias or Paul and if it's Paul I'll gladly recant. But as far as I can tell Matthias is the 12<sup>th</sup> apostle. Paul's apostleship was of the second category. But Paul had something unique we want to add and that is that Paul went into the Arabian desert for about three years and was taught personally by the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul got one on one attention from the resurrected Christ and that's the conclusion of verse 1.

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