

In this letter Paul continues to argue his authority and credentials in preaching the gospel. In this he tells of his journeys and meetings with some of the apostles of Jesus.

1. Paul explains his gospel message to the pillars of the church. Galatians 2:1-3

The apostle along with his missionary companions travelled to Jerusalem because of a revelation. This may have been because of the famine prophesied by Agabus in Acts 11, or another revelation from the LORD. It seems more likely that the Lord told them to go to Jerusalem, that they might have the confirmation that their message is accurate to the teachings of Christ as authority to stand up to those who were perverting the gospel. The lack of credentials among pastors is a serious issue.

2. Reasons for meeting the apostles— infiltrators in the church. Galatians 2:4-5

The word for infiltrators includes those who would carry out sabotage. They bring division and create controversy and confusion. Jesus taught that Satan sows troublemaking unbelievers in churches.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 _____

2 Corinthians 11:1-4, 12-15 _____

The importance of training, credentials and accountability is critical for pastoral or church planting ministry. Don't follow anyone who has not gone through at least a minimal of theological education and has submitted themselves to an ordaining counsel.

3. His message is verified as true by the apostles. Galatians 2:6-10

The apostles confirmed the accuracy of Paul's message and recognized the strategic nature of his ministry to the gentiles. Though their mission field was different, the same God was at work in them. James Peter and John extended the hand of fellowship with them— acknowledging their communion in following and preaching Christ. There was to be no separation in the body of Christ between Jew and Gentile, the dividing lines, in particular circumcision, dietary restrictions, and Sabbath regulations were eliminated in Christ. The apostles also affirmed the importance of helping the poor tangibly.

4. Paul's authority displayed in Antioch. Galatians 2:11-13

Here we read of the practical outcomes of following legalists. Cephas is Peter. The name is strategic here because Jesus used the name Cephas often when Peter was acting out of line. Peter had caved to the legalists who were corrupting the gospel. He refused to eat with gentiles when the Judaizers were around— even though he had received a revelation before that all foods are acceptable. (see Acts 10:9-16) It seems that the "works of the law" in this context were the biblical dividing principles plus the "traditions of men" or "customs". (verse 11). This kind of thinking ultimately leads to hypocrisy— as all legalism will do ultimately. (verse 13). Hypocrisy is dissimulation, faking of pretending to be something you aren't. Play-acting. Legalism is not a sign of spirituality. Matthew 23:23-28 _____