

Satan's Strong Deception On The Church

Compiled/formatted by Tom Stephens

I never thought too much about the Apostle Paul until I began to study his life while in Southwestern A/G College, now a university in Waxahachie, Texas. Thomas Harrison was possibly one of the most animated professors of the Word of God I suppose I have ever heard. I loved to watch him pace across the classroom with his joyous smile and intensity of spirit while teaching God's anointed words. What I remember most though, was his subject, *The Apostle Paul*. I would leave Brother Harrison's class with the same spirit of joy I had witnessed in each and every lesson. I can rightly say this:

Though Brother Harrison taught all basic subjects of the Word of God, the epistles of Paul were my favorite lessons because Paul then became my most excitable (impressive) instructor—ever, even to this date. After sitting in bible classes taught by this enjoyable minister for four years, I was consumed with the same peace and joy shown by this great instructor of the Word of God.

Paul did nothing in half-measure. His persecution of the early Church was carried on with such zeal that he is said to have *wrought havoc* among the Christians! By his own testimony we know that he enthusiastically and in all good conscience arrested and imprisoned all professing Christ-followers upon whom he could lay hold. He stood by and consented to the death of Stephen, and I have often wondered if the vision of that young martyr's face, shining with heavenly glory as he died under the stones of the mob, did not linger in Paul's memory until his dying day.

There is no doubt that the Apostle Paul was keenly aware that God had given him a special and a unique message, to be proclaimed by him and penned down for you and me. As we study Paul's epistles it is evident that he was deeply conscious of the wonder of the Gospel, as well as being alert to the fact that he was Divinely appointed to proclaim this glorious message.

The Gospel of the crucified, buried, risen Christ was supernaturally revealed to Paul—first, as he traveled to Damascus to persecute the Christians there (Acts 9:1-6); then, as he waited through three days and nights of total blindness until the Lord sent Ananias to him, where he (Ananias) being obedient to the Lord, prayed for Saul, causing the scales to fall from his eyes. Note here that **1)** Saul's eyes were fully healed, and **2)** scales fell from his eyes—demonstrating the fact that not only could Saul now *see* clearly—he was able to *supernaturally* receive revelations from the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the Gospel and the doctrines of the Church; hence "scales fell from his eyes! (Acts 9:7-16; 2 Corinthians 11:24-33 [**Paul's Sufferings**]). Remember when Jesus breathed on His disciples after His Resurrection? In this, He gave them His own *peace* they would need—and they would be able to understand His Word, supernaturally!

Saul (Paul) testified in court that same day he could see. (Acts 9:8-19); and finally, during the three years he spent in the desert in Arabia (Gal. 1:11-18). During these three experiences, God revealed to Paul this glorious Gospel, and made known to him *all truth*:

¹¹But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is *not after man*. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: ¹⁴And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. (Galatians 1:11-18—my italics/underscore)

Paul assured the believers in Rome that he was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1).

In Galatians 1:11,12 he testified that the message was not his own, nor was it the message of man: "...I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is *not after man*. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

To Timothy, his son in the ministry, he speaks of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, *which was committed to my trust*" (I Tim. 1:11).

In I Thessalonians 1:5 he speaks of the Gospel which "came not unto you in word only, but also *in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, in much assurance."

In II Corinthians 4:3 and II Thessalonians 2:14 he refers to the Gospel as "*OUR Gospel*."

In Romans 2:16 he speaks of "the day when God *shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to MY Gospel*," and in II Timothy 2:8 he says, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David *was raised from the dead according to MY Gospel*."

In I Corinthians 15:1 and in Galatians 2:2 Paul refers to "the Gospel *which I preach*."

In Acts 20:24 he speaks of "the Gospel of *the grace of God*."

In Romans 1: 1 he speaks of "*the Gospel of God*," and in Romans 1:9 he refers to "*the Gospel of His Son*." In Romans 1:16 he speaks of "*the Gospel of Christ*."

Speaking of various *experiences* in the Gospel, Paul mentions "the *fellowship* of the Gospel (Phil. 1:5), "the *defence and confirmation* of the Gospel" (Phil, 1: 7), "the *faith* of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:27), "the *truth* of the Gospel" (Col. 1:5), "the *hope* of the Gospel" (Col. 1:23), the "*afflictions*" of the Gospel (I Thess. 1:6), and the "*light*" of the Gospel (II Tim. 1:10). In Philemon 13 he speaks of himself as being "*in the bonds* of the Gospel."

In his epistles, Paul speaks of the Gospel as relating to various classes of people. He mentions those who are "*called by the Gospel*" (II Thess. 2:14), those who are "*begotten by the Gospel*" (I Cor. 4:15), those who are "*stablished by the Gospel*" (Rom. 16:25); and those who "*obey not the Gospel*" (II Thess. 1:8,).

Speaking of himself and of his own divinely appointed ministry, Paul testifies, "Woe is

unto me, if I *preach not* the Gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16); and finally, he thunders out a solemn warning to any and all who may pervert the Gospel and preach any other message than that which contains "all truth":

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, 9).

Paul Taught Concerning Our Walk in Christ's Spirit Versus Walking in The Flesh (Law). Apostle Paul's explanation of Romans 7:

¹⁶This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

¹⁷For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

¹⁸But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

²⁴And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

²⁶Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

(Galatians 5:16-26)

Bibliography:

¹**The Gospel of Grace.** Oliver B Greene; The Gospel Hour, Inc., Greenville, S.C.; Copyright © 1965; USA

²**Power Through Pentecost.** H. John Ockenga; Minister of Park Street Church, Boston, Mass.; WB Eerdmans Publ. Company Grand Rapids.

³**The Holy Bible. KJV.** Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tn.; Copyright 1976.