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The Problem with Paul

I will never forget the beginning of my relationship with our heavenly Father. It was like I had begun a Quest. A quest to know Him and to be pleasing in His sight. Every night as I was reading the scriptures He would take me on a journey. It was a very exciting time in my life and the more I read the bible, and desired to know Him, the more he revealed Himself to me. The more I knew of Him... The more I wanted to know. I was on the adventure of a lifetime, and I couldn't get enough. Some nights I would sit at my table reading the bible for eight or ten hours at a time, not wanting to walk away from the things He was revealing to me, and then going to work with only three or four hours sleep.

But there was one thing that I couldn't understand... Why were the things that they were teaching in the church oftentimes contrary to the teachings of Christ? Why were they always teaching from the books written by Paul? I just couldn't comprehend it... I mean... It was the Gospel of Jesus Christ wasn't it...? Shouldn't they be teaching about salvation from His words...? Wouldn't He know more about the Heavenly Father and His will for our lives than anybody else...?

I began to question the leaders of the church, and why they taught the things they did. They told me... "Paul's revelation is hard to understand for those that are not spiritual" or "Paul knew Christ better than anybody else". I was even told things like, "You're getting into it too deep" and "you don't have enough faith". Some people even started to avoid me and began to look down upon me, a couple of times I was even mocked. Eventually I

learned just to sit in church and shut my mouth.

For fifteen years I sat there and shut my mouth.

But every time I read my bible I got this feeling of uneasiness when it came to the teachings of Paul. Every church service I would walk away feeling that something was not right.

In 2001 I decided to study the ancient texts to discover once and for all, one way or another... Are these feelings of uneasiness that I have been having (not just about Paul, but about a whole range of church doctrine) for the last twenty odd years justified? or am I deceiving myself...

These are my discoveries...

The Problem with Paul

Part 1

On the subject of investigating Paul... It seemed reasonable to me at that time that... If I am feeling this uneasiness about Paul... and it holds any weight whatsoever... Then the original disciples of Christ would have felt the same thing.

James, The Half Brother of Christ seemed to hold a lot of weight in the early Church. Thorough research led me to discover that there was no authority higher than James within the early church after the departure of Christ. Various early Christian sources have James being elected by the apostles as bishop of Jerusalem at the behest of Jesus.

About his election to succeed Jesus, and about his death, WE ARE NOT INFORMED BY CANONICAL ACTS. We must go to other sources. Eusebius of Caesarea (260-340 CE), Archbishop under Constantine, tells us in his Ecclesiastical History that James was "the lord's brother, who had been elected by the Apostles to the episcopal throne at Jerusalem," (E.H. 2.23).

Knowing Jesus would soon depart from them, his disciples, according to the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, asked him who would lead them, "And Jesus said to them, 'In the place you are to go, go to James the Righteous, for whose sake Heaven and Earth came into existence,'" (Coptic logion 12).

Palestinian Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (315-404 CE), had access to works he said were called the Anabathmoi Jacobou (the 'Ascents of James') and the Gospel of the Hebrews (used by ancient Jewish Christians called Ebionites, or the 'Poor'), both now lost, in which we learn, "once during a drought, he [James] lifted his hands to Heaven and prayed and at once Heaven sent rain... Thus they no longer called him by his name, but his name was, rather, the Righteous One [in Hebrew, the 'Zaddik'].

"[T]o James alone, it was allowed to enter once a year into the Holy of Holies [the innermost sanctum of the Temple], because he was a Nazirite and connected to the priesthood. Hence Mary was related in two ways to Elizabeth [John the Baptist's mother] and James was a distinguished member of the priesthood, because the two tribes alone were linked to one another, the royal tribe to the priestly," (Panarion 30).

He tells us the 'Ascents of James' was about the discourses James gave from the Temple to the Jerusalem masses, and says that James was "the First to whom the lord entrusted his throne upon earth."

Jerome (342-420 CE), basing his knowledge on Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and the Jewish historian Josephus, also knows this when he says in his Lives of Illustrious Men ch. 2 that "He [James] alone enjoyed the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies, since, indeed, he did not wear woolen, but only linen clothes, and went into the Temple alone and prayed on behalf of the people, so that his knees were reputed to have acquired the callousness of a camel's knees", and that after Jesus died he "was immediately appointed Bishop of Jerusalem

by the Apostles.”

Palestinian Jewish Christian Hegesippus (100-180 CE), portions of whose five books of early Church history only survive in passages cited by Eusebius, tells us, “There were many James’, but this one...the Lord’s brother...was Holy from his birth. Everyone from the Lord’s time till our own has called him the Righteous”, and that “[b]ecause of his unsurpassable Righteousness he was called the Righteous, and Oblias,” the latter being a strange word he describes as meaning “Bulwark of the People, and Righteousness,” (E.H. 2.23); for Epiphanius, the word means “Wall”; for Eusebius, the “Protection of the People.”

The second century Syriac Apostolic Constitutions tell us that James was “the brother of Christ according to the flesh...and one appointed Bishop of Jerusalem by the Lord Himself,” (8.35).

In another passage surviving only in Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE) tells us that the ‘gift of knowledge’ was imparted by Jesus to “James the Righteous, to John, and to Peter,” and that these in turn “delivered it to the rest of the Apostles, and they to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one,” (E.H. 2.1). Clement of Rome (30-97 CE), or someone purporting to be him, addresses his letter in the non-canonical Pseudo-Clementine Homilies of Clement to “James...the Bishop of Bishops, who rules Jerusalem, the Holy Assembly of the Hebrews and the Assemblies everywhere,” as does Peter similarly in his Homilies letter.

Even Josephus (37-96 CE), who was not a Christian as we understand it –but who was a contemporary of James– knows about him, and even insists that James’ death was the reason the Jewish people believed Jerusalem fell: “These things [the Uprising and consequent destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans] happened to the Jews in requital for James the Righteous, who was a brother of Jesus known as Christ, for though he was the most Righteous of men, the Jews put him to death.” This passage, remarked on also by Origen (185-254 CE), and Jerome, only exists in Eusebius’ E.H., Jerome’s Commentary on Galatians, and Origen’s letter (Contra Celsus 1.47), and, interestingly, IS NO LONGER EXTANT IN ANY MANUSCRIPT WE HAVE OF JOSEPHUS. Commenting on it, Eusebius says, “So remarkable a person must James have been, so universally esteemed for Righteousness, that even the most intelligent of Jews felt this was why his martyrdom was immediately followed by the siege of Jerusalem,” (E.H. 2.23). This contradicts Christian belief that the Temple fell because of the prophecy and death of Jesus, as Origen is well aware and at pains to ‘correct’ in Contra Celsus. This latter also tells us that “the wonderful thing is that, though he [Josephus] did not accept Jesus as Christ, he yet gave testimony that the Righteousness of James was so great...that the people thought they had suffered these things on account of [him],” (Commentary on Matthew; 10.17).

For his part, Jerome, in his Lives, writes “This same Josephus records the tradition that this James was of so great Holiness and reputation among the people that the destruction of Jerusalem was believed to have occurred on account of his death,” and in a Commentary that “So Holy was James that the people zealously tried to touch the fringes of his garment,” (Commentary on Galatians 1:19); these are the fringes commanded to be worn by observant Jews in Numbers 15:38, “so that, when you see [them], you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and DO THEM.”

“For whose sake Heaven and Earth came into existence,” “Holy from his birth,” “the Righteous One,” “Bulwark of the People,” Jerusalem falling “on account of his death” ... These are strong words, and not to be lightly dismissed, and are consistent with what ALL SOURCES SAY ABOUT HIM. It is important to point out that our sources are not presenting James as just the Head of “Christianity”, but the POPULAR JEWISH LEADER OF HIS DAY, the Zaddik, par excellence, whose death brought the downfall of Jerusalem, and is in keeping with the notion in Proverbs (10:25) and the Kabbalah (Zohar 1.59b) that “the Zaddik is the Foundation” and “the Pillar that upholds the world.” Paul understands this when he speaks in Galatians of going up to Jerusalem and meeting “James, Cephas, and John, those reputed to be Pillars,” (Gal. 2:9), and his attitude towards them is very, very helpful in determining who is the parallel character in the Dead Sea Scrolls known as the ‘Windbag,’ the ‘Comedian,’ the ‘Spouter of Lies,’ the ‘Man of Scoffing.’

Josephus and Hegesippus -and because of them, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus (160-235 CE), Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome -even ancient Christian literature recently found in Nag Hammadi, Egypt (like the lost Gospel of Thomas above) knew of James’ death, but not, oddly, Acts. Because Josephus knew of it first hand, it would seem best to use his account.

According to him, when the Roman Governor died in 62 CE -and the new one was still on his way to Judaea- Establishment High Priest Ananus ben Ananus used the occasion to illegally try and execute Jesus' brother James, because of his role as supreme leader of the Jesus Movement:

“[H]e assembled the Sanhedrin [the 'Supreme Court'] of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some of his companions. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the Law, he delivered them to be stoned. But those citizens who seemed the most equitable and THE MOST CAREFUL IN THE OBSERVATION OF THE LAW were offended by this,” (Antiquities of the Jews 20.1).

Two generations later, a more legendary account is recorded by Hegesippus, but with the note that James “proved a true witness to Jews and Gentiles alike that Jesus is the Christ,” (E.H. 2.23).

It is now we must turn to the Pseudo-Clementines for information on James' leadership, which tell us: “The Assembly of the Lord, which was constituted in Jerusalem, was most plentifully multiplied and grew, being governed with the most Righteous ordinances by James,” (Recognitions of Clement 1.43).

“Our lord and prophet, who has sent us, declared to us that the Evil One, having disputed with him for forty days, but failing to prevail against him, promised that he would send Apostles from among his subjects to deceive them. Therefore, above all, remember to shun ANY APOSTLE, TEACHER OR PROPHET WHO DOES NOT ACCURATELY COMPARE HIS TEACHING WITH JAMES...the brother of our Lord...and this, even if he comes to you with recommendations,” (Homilies of Clement' 11.35).

So... Having established the authority and integrity of James in the early church I now had the perfect standard by which to measure the acceptance of Paul.

Next... I needed to establish... Did the two (James and Paul) ever meet...? And what happened if they did...?

Acts 15 1And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

According to the scripture above... Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them were sent to Jerusalem to have their doctrine judged by James because Paul was preaching against circumcision. Circumcision was the sign of a covenant that God had made with Abraham way back in Genesis Chapter 17. This was a covenant that God had stated was to be an everlasting covenant (Genesis 17 verse 13)

Genesis 17 9 Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. 10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. 13 Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

So... Paul was declaring that the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants after him for the generations to come, an everlasting covenant, no longer applied. James, knowing that the Law was being read in the synagogues every sabbath day (Acts 15:21) Judged that the Gentiles abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood .

Paul actually mentions this encounter with James, Peter and John in his letter to the Galatians: Galatians 2 1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

There are two Very important things that I notice in this text in Galatians chapter 2. Two things that give us a very brief glimpse into the true nature of Paul: 1. Paul does not show any respect in his statement when talking about James, Peter and the other elders in Jerusalem, as a matter of fact he seems to show a level of contempt towards them: 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 2. In Galatians 2 verses 7 and 8 Paul tells everybody that God ordained Peter as the apostle to the Jews and He ordained Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles yet at that very same meeting that Paul attended in Jerusalem in Acts 15: 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

According to Paul's version of the story in Galatians he went up to Jerusalem 'by revelation' (v:2) whereas according to Acts 15 (v:2) it was determined by the Christian Jews that he was to go to Jerusalem to have his doctrine judged by James and the elders.

It seems to me that Paul's view of the meeting in Jerusalem is very distorted at the very least, or possibly - the very worst scenario is that Paul is lying.

Paul also states in Galatians 2 verse 6 that "they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me". Yet Acts 15 states in verse 20 "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

If I were to make a judgement on the content in Galatians 2, I could only assume that Paul didn't respect James

and the elders in Jerusalem and he didn't respect James's verdict. Another evidence of this hypothesis might be found in 1 Corinthians chapter 8. 1Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 2And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3But if any man love God, the same is known of him. 4As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. 5For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. 7Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 9But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

Here in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 Paul is stating that those who have knowledge of God can eat food sacrificed to idols with a clear conscience and if anybody is offended when they see a Christian sitting in the idol's temple eating food sacrificed to idols he is weak.

James had something to say about Paul's teachings on a subsequent visit by Paul to Jerusalem. Acts 21 states: 17And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. 27And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. 31And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

James seems to definitely have a problem with Paul teaching all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. James told Paul to go and purify himself in order to prove to the Christian Jews that Paul himself also walks orderly, and keeps the law (v:24). In verse 25 James reaffirms that the Gentiles are to keep themselves from things offered to idols which is contrary to Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians chapter 8. Acts 21 as revealed above, in verse 20 James declares that there are many thousands of Jews which believe; and they are all zealous of the law. Apparently these thousands of Jews which believed didn't like Paul's teachings either for when they see him in the temple they drag him off and try to kill him. The only reason Paul wasn't killed was because the Roman soldiers came and saved him. The main question that comes to my mind at this point is... Where was James..? He was the Bishop of the temple... Why didn't he come to Paul's defence...?

There are also other instances where Paul had disagreements with the Lord's disciples In Galatians 2 Paul declares: "11But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face". In acts 15 Paul also had a huge

argument with his friend and travel companion Barnabas: “39And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other:” and in 2 Timothy chapter 1 Paul complains that all of the churches in Asia have turned away from him as he writes to Timothy: “15This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;”.

So It appears that the early church did at first try to accept Paul and his teachings but afterwards rejected him.

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Part 2

When looking for an answer to the first question in my research on Paul; ‘Did the original disciples of Christ accept Paul and his teachings?’, the only realistic and logical conclusion that I could come up with according to the scriptures is that the early church did at first try to accept Paul and his teachings but afterwards rejected him. Especially when the witness of Paul’s own words are brought into the equation. In 2 Timothy chapter 1 Paul declares that all of the churches in Asia have turned away from him: “15This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;”.

Now... If the early church rejected Paul and his teachings... Why? Why would the church reject Paul? Upon superficial study we find that Paul was rejected by the Christian Jews in Jerusalem because he taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs (Acts 21:17-31), a doctrine which was first brought to the attention of James and the Christian council in Jerusalem in Acts 15.

But why would “all they which are in Asia” be turned away from him? There are two things that stand out to me in this text - 2 Timothy chapter 1:15 “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;” The first thing that draws my attention in his statement is the fact that he writes “All” they which are in Asia have turned away from him. ‘All they which are in Asia’. There doesn’t seem to be much room for discussion here. It seems that whatever happened in Asia that caused them to reject Paul had spread throughout ‘All’ Asia. And ‘All’ seemed to be in agreement with regard to rejecting him. And the second thing that draws my attention in this text is that Paul says that all those in Asia have “turned away from me”. He doesn’t say that they have turned away from Christ, but declares that they have turned away from him (Paul).

There is somebody else in the bible that talks about the churches in Asia: Revelation 9I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Revelation 2 1Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

The very first letter to the churches in Asia in the book of Revelation is addressed to the Ephesians at the church at Ephesus. It commends them on their works, their labour and their patience, and the fact that they can not tolerate those who are evil. It states that they have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

According to the references that we have available to us in the bible there is only one person directly quoted as declaring themselves to be an apostle to the Ephesians: Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the

will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Is the verse in Revelation that states “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” referring to Paul? By his own admission “All” the churches in Asia had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15) which by default includes the church at Ephesus.

The verse in Revelation 2:2 says “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” which says to me that God knew they were not apostles and the church in Ephesus suspecting that they weren’t looked for some form of evidence to prove if these people who claimed apostleship were lying or telling the truth. Apparently the evidence or proof pointed to the fact that they were liars. They were tried or tested and found to be liars with regard to their apostleship.

Is the verse in Revelation 2:2 declaring that Paul was a false apostle... A liar...? Is this the reason why all the church in Asia turned away from him...? Is the verse 2 Timothy 1:15 the end result of these findings...? How would you try, test and prove the validity of somebody’s claim to apostleship...? Is there a standard by which we can measure such claims...? And if so... Does Paul measure up to this standard...?

I guess a good place to start would be to look at the original meaning of the word ‘Apostle’. According to the ‘Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible’ the original meaning of the word apostle is: A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders a) specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ b) in a broader sense applied to other eminent Christian teachers 1) of Barnabas 2) of Timothy and Silvanus

Paul declared himself to be an apostle on many occasions throughout the ‘New Testament’ and that is exactly what Paul claimed to be... a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders.

So the word apostle is specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ, but is also used in a broader sense and applied to other eminent Christian teachers. Looking at the original meaning of the word ‘apostle’ sheds a little more light on the original meaning and use of the word but does not prove one way or the other whether Paul was a true apostle or not. But this does pose another question... how many apostles are (were) there...? When looking into the meaning of the word ‘apostle’ we find that the word was ‘specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ, but is also used in a broader sense and applied to other eminent Christian teachers’. So... were there twelve apostles... or were there more...? Are there any references in the bible telling us how many apostles there were?

Revelation 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

According to the above verse there is a very specific number of apostles. Twelve. There are twelve apostles of the Lamb. According to this scripture, the fact that the number of apostles is twelve is non negotiable, it is so non negotiable that, to coin a phrase, it has been set in concrete!

So... Who were these apostles...?

Luke 6 13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; 14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Twelve apostles are named in Matthew 10 and in Luke 6 which agrees with the verse in Revelation 21:14 that there are only twelve apostles. There is no mention of Jesus (the Lamb) naming any others as apostles anywhere else in the bible. There is no mention of Paul being named as an apostle in either Matthew 10 or Luke 6.

Now... We have twelve apostles... one dies.... Judas Iscariot... Leaving only eleven. If Paul took Judas’ place as the twelfth apostle... then he could truly be one of the twelve apostles mentioned in Revelation 21:14. Is there any reference in the bible to another person taking Judas Iscariot’s place as the twelfth apostle...? Did Paul take the place of Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle...? If so... then his claim to being an apostle has some

weight to it.

The book of Acts does in fact tell us that somebody took the place of Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle: Acts 1 15And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

No... It was Not Paul that was numbered among the twelve apostles. It was a man named Matthias. According to Revelation 21:14 there are twelve apostles of the Lamb. That number is set in concrete so to speak. Paul is not one of the twelve. So... According to scripture Paul's claim to being an Apostle of Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God) does not hold any weight whatsoever.

But does that make Paul a liar...? Those are pretty strong words. Although... The evidence does seem to be stacking up against Paul. In Paul's own words in 2 Timothy 1:15 "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me;" Something major must have taken place within 'all' the churches in Asia for 'everybody' to turn against Paul.

The verse in Revelation 2:2 says "thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars". Having tried, or tested Paul's claims of being an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the scriptures, I myself find his claims wanting. There is no scriptural evidence supporting his claims... The only evidence I can find in the scriptures regarding his apostolic authority are to the contrary of Paul's claims... There is no room in scripture for thirteen apostles.

However... Revelation 2:2 goes even further when it says "and hast found them liars". To my way of thinking... you would want to have some pretty definite proof that somebody is lying before you go calling them a liar. Just because Paul's claim of apostleship doesn't meet the scriptural apostleship standard doesn't necessarily mean he's a liar... Does it...?

Revelation 2:2 states that the church at Ephesus tried these false apostles and found them to be liars.

In a court of law... to try somebody... you have to have supporting evidence.

Liars use words to lie... We have plenty of Paul's words written in the bible that we can examine to test whether he is a liar or not.

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Part 3

Having established in this study that Paul was rejected by the Christian Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-31), and according to Paul's own testimony he was rejected by all of the Christians throughout Asia (2 Timothy 1:15)...

And having established that there are only twelve apostles of the lamb (Revelation 21:14) and that the twelve formally ordained by the church and by God did not include Paul (Acts 1:15-26) and thus Paul's claim of being an apostle of Christ does not hold any weight scripturally...

What do we really know...?

We know that Paul laid claim to being "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus" (Ephesians 1:1) We know that the Church at Ephesus was commended because they had "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:" (Revelation 2:2) We know that Ephesus was in Asia (Revelation 1:11) We know that the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw Paul in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, And took Paul outside to kill him. (Acts 21:28-31) We know that by Paul's own admission "All" the churches in Asia had turned away from him (2 Timothy 1:15)

How do we know that the facts cited above are true...? Because we have proven them to be true according to the evidence set before us (the bible).

However, at this point, we can not say with any certainty whether the text in Revelation 2:2 is referring to Paul and his followers or not. To establish this as fact, one way or the other, we need to take a closer look at the 'evidence' presented before us (the bible). Revelation 2:2 says that the church at Ephesus tried, or tested those who called themselves apostles, and found that they were liars.

Are we able to judge today one way or the other, whether Paul and his followers were found liars or not...? Is this the reason that all the church in Asia turned away from Paul...? Is there any evidence for us to examine and make a truthful decision just as the church at Ephesus did in Revelation 2:2...?

1 John 4 1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Matthew 12: 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

I believe that the best place to start would be to look at Paul's actual 'conversion' and his background before his 'conversion'.

Before Paul's 'conversion' experience, Paul was a Pharisee. Christ had a lot of interaction with the Pharisees. What exactly was Christ's view of the Pharisees? John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

As a matter of fact... Paul still claimed to be a Pharisee even after his 'conversion': Acts 23 6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

Now... Regarding Paul's conversion... There are three separate accounts of Paul's conversion found in the book of Acts:

Acts 9 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

Acts 22 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto

me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10And I said, What shall I do, LORD? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

Acts 26 12Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

These three separate accounts of Paul's conversion, relate three different versions that contradict each other.

In Acts 9:7 we have a record of Paul's men hearing a voice and seeing no man (ie Jesus). But in Acts 22:9 it is just the opposite... we have Paul claiming that the men saw the light, but did not hear a voice.

Why the blatant discrepancy...? In Acts 22 Paul is appearing before the Hebrew counsel, and may have changed his story to one where his companions saw a light, but did not hear the voice when defending himself to the Jews because it adds more credibility to his vision. I mean, a voice could be anyone's voice.

In Acts 9 and Acts 22 only Paul fell to the ground. And then in Acts 26, another blatant discrepancy... Here Paul says that the light shone around everyone and everyone fell to the ground.

In Acts 26 Paul was defending himself in the Court of King Agrippa, dramatising the vision by claiming all his men fell to the earth highlighted the great impact this event had not just on his life, but those who were in his presence.

In Acts 9 and Acts 22 Paul asks "what do you want me to do?" And the Lord tells Paul to go into the city (Damascus) and there he will be told what to do. But in Acts 26 Paul doesn't ask the Lord what to do... Instead the Lord commands Paul... 16But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

In Acts 26 The Lord told Paul right there and then what He wanted Paul to do which is contradictory to the other two accounts in Acts 9 and Acts 22 where the lord told Paul that he would be told what to do later.

Yes there are contradictions in these three separate accounts.

But it gets worse...

In Acts 26 Paul says in his defence to King Agrippa: 19Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

However...

In Galatians 1 Paul tells a different story about what happened immediately after his 'conversion': Galatians 1
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. 19But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20Now the things which I
write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

In Acts 26 Paul says that he was not disobedient to the vision but that he went "first unto them of Damascus,
and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles". Acts 9 agrees with this...
As does Acts 22...

But in Galatians 1 Paul says that he didn't go "first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout
all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles". In Galatians 1 Paul says instead "immediately I conferred not
with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into
Arabia" And then Paul says "behold, before God, I lie not."

Paul boldly declares in Galatians 1... "behold, before God, I lie not."... But Luke contradicts Paul's record of
events after Paul's 'conversion' completely... Luke tells us that After Paul saw the light on the road to
Damascus Paul immediately went to Damascus and was baptised. And relates the events occurring immediately
after his baptism: Acts 9: 19And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days
with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is
the Son of God. 21But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called
on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief
priests? 22But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving
that this is very Christ. 23And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24But their
laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25Then the disciples
took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he
assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.
27But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in
the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.
28And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

Now somebody is not telling the truth here...

According to the scriptures... Paul has changed his story quite a few times regarding his 'conversion'.

In a Court of Law, such contradictory evidence would be held suspect and hence cross-examined or dismissed.

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Part 4

Now... The question remains...

Is Paul a Liar...???

We have evidence in the book of acts that Paul did not always tell the truth. Christian, As difficult as it may be
to accept... We need to face the facts... And the Fact Is that somebody who chops and changes the contradictory
stories of their conversion to suit the circumstances is a liar.

Paul boldly declares in Galatians 1... "behold, before God, I lie not." when relating his conversion story to the
Galatians... But Luke contradicts Paul's record of events of what happened after after Paul's 'miraculous vision'

completely in Acts 9, Acts 22 and Acts 26.

There was obviously contention over Paul's contradictory conversion stories, as Paul feels the need to defend himself by reinforcing that he is not lying when relating this contradictory story of his conversion to the Galatians.

Galatians 1:20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie (NIV).

YAHU'SHUA said: Matthew 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Paul was in the room and heard Peter declare that God made choice, that the Gentiles by his (Peter's) mouth should hear the word of the gospel (ACTS 15:7), yet Paul changes the facts about this encounter with Peter and takes Peter's apostleship to the Gentiles as his own as he belittles the other apostles (Galatians 2:1-8) and tells everybody that God ordained Peter as the apostle to the Jews and He ordained Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul does however, in his own letters, confess to being a Liar and using Craftiness and deceit: Romans 3:7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? (maybe it's because you lied Paul) 2 Corinthians 12:16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit.

Paul was a Pharisee.

Even after his 'conversion' he professed to be a Pharisee. Acts 23:6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!"

I sometimes wonder if Paul the Pharisee was present when YAHU'SHUA addressed the Pharisees in John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The Pharisee's held (and still do hold) strict adherence to the Talmudic traditions. They placed more importance on adherence to the Talmudic traditions (the traditions of men) than they did adherence to the Torah (the commandments of God).

YAHU'SHUA addressed their hypocrisy head on: Mark 7: 1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. 7 BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' 8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." 9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10 "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; 11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

According to Paul's writings he never really let go of those traditions: 1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Galatians 1:14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

Could it be that in John 8:44 YAHU'SHUA HA MASHIACH spoke prophetically to Paul the Pharisee, just as He spoke prophetically to Judas Iscariot at the last supper regarding His betrayal?

Just as He spoke prophetically to Peter in John 21:18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."

Galatians Chapter 2 gives us some of the clearest insights into Paul's lying and hypocritical nature.

Galatians 2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. 3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. 5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. 6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They only asked us to remember the poor--the very thing I also was eager to do.

LIE 1: As mentioned earlier... According to Paul's version of the story in Galatians he went up to Jerusalem 'by revelation' (v:2) whereas according to Acts 15 (v:2) it was determined by the Christian Jews that he was to go to Jerusalem to have his doctrine judged by James and the elders.

LIE 2: Paul states "seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)"... But PETER SAYS in Acts 15:7 "After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that BY MY MOUTH the GENTILES would hear the word of the gospel and believe. Here Paul STEALS Peter's Apostleship."

LIE 3: 6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. 10 They only asked us to remember the poor--the very thing I also was eager to do. Yet again... Acts 15 tells a different story in verse 20 stating that James DID Add Something to Paul. James passed judgement "that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." According to the evidence set before us, Paul lies here because he disagrees with James' judgement as in 1 Corinthians Chapter 8 Paul teaches that it is alright to eat meat at an idol feast in an idol's temple that has been sacrificed to an idol (just make sure that no Christians see you).

Revelation 2:2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:20 "To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law".

Yet when Peter the Jew was eating with the Gentiles (became as a gentile)... And When the Jews came he withdrew himself and ate with the Jews (became as a Jew)... Paul rebukes Peter and Barnabus and in front of everybody calls them Hypocrites. Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. 13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

It seems that when the Jews came from James, that Peter spoke with the Gentiles about the importance of adherence to the Torah and Lawless Paul got upset.

Just like our enemy Satan, Paul teaches men that they do not need to keep the Commandments of YHVH.

Satan: g4567 Satanas

1) adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act), the name given to

a) the prince of evil spirits, the inveterate adversary of God and Christ

1) he incites apostasy from God and to sin

2) circumventing men by his wiles

3) the worshippers of idols are said to be under his control

4) by his demons he is able to take possession of men and inflict them with diseases

5) by God's assistance he is overcome

6) on Christ's return from heaven he will be bound with chains for a thousand years, but when the thousand years are finished he will walk the earth in yet greater power, but shortly after will be given over to eternal punishment

b) a Satan-like man

Paul manifests the Character of his Father, Satan, the Devil: John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

the devil, g1228 diabolos

1) prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely

a) a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer,

2) metaph. applied to a man who, by opposing the cause of God, may be said to act the part of the devil or to side with him

Saul of Tarsus, a Talmudian Pharisee, and murderer who persecuted the true followers of the way, was of the Tribe of Benjamin.

Genesis 49:27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, And in the evening he divides the spoil."

Matthew 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

ravens g727 harpax

- 1) rapacious, ravenous
- 2) a extortioner, a robber

That sounds like most Christian preachers today!

1 Corinthians 9:7 No soldier ever serves in the army and pays his own salary. No one ever plants a vineyard without eating some of the grapes. No person takes care of a flock without drinking some of the milk.

11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who tell the Good News should get their living from the gospel.

Today... I don't think that I would be able to find a Christian Church where the 'Money Message' is not preached, or where the minister has not made a career out of the ministry.

The Prophets of Profit are everywhere...

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Mark 8:15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, " Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Our Lord YAHU'SHUA gave us plenty of warning...

Matthew 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and will mislead many.

34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Christ; g5547 Christos = ANOINTED

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am Anointed,' and will mislead many.

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and will mislead many.

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, Romans 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 2 Corinthians 13:3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

One definition of antichrist is : In the place of... Or instead of... Christ.

antichrist g500 antichristos

- 1) the adversary of the Messiah

from G473 anti

- 1) over against, opposite to, before
- 2) for, instead of, in place of (something)
 - a) instead of
 - b) for
 - c) for that, because
 - d) wherefore, for this cause

and G5547 Christos

Christ = "anointed"

- 1) Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God
- 2) anointed

YAHU'SHUA warns, Matthew 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect".

Paul points to his SIGNS AND WONDERS and miracles as the mark of the true apostle: 2 Corinthians:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. Matthew 24:25 "Behold, I have told you in advance.

John 21:15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

John 21:18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."

Paul certainly tied Peter's hands when he stole Peter's Apostleship to the Gentiles and he led Peter where he didn't want to go when he declared that Peter was ordained as Apostle to the Jews. Then Christianity via the Catholic church finished what Paul started.

1 John 2:18-19 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

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Part 5

According to Paul it is ok if a Christian enters into an idol's temple and eats food that has been sacrificed to idols.

1 Corinthians 8:1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But the man who loves God is known by God. 4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so

accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. 9Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? 11So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

Paul says that it is alright to eat meat at an idol feast that has been sacrificed to an idol (just make sure that no christians see you).

But isn't the idol feast part of the worship of the idol? Of course it is!

Paul is teaching that a strong christian can participate in idolatry with a clear conscience. What a load of rubbish. How is it that christians can read these letters of Paul's and still think that he is led by the Spirit of YHVH?

What do those who are really led by the Spirit of YHVH have to say about eating food sacrificed to idols?

In the book of Acts 15:20, James the Brother of Our Lord tells Paul to teach "telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols". James and the other elders at the church in Jerusalem even wrote a letter to the 'gentile churches' that paul had established stating "You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality".

Later, according to Acts 21:20-25, Paul still wasn't listening because James tells Paul that the Christian Jews are angry about what Paul is teaching, and again James reinforces his stance on food sacrificed to idols by stating, "As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality"

YAHU'SHUA (Jesus) Himself condemns the practice of eating food sacrificed to idols. In the book of Revelation He is reported by John as saying: Revelation 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

And: Revelation 2:20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

Now, many will come in defence of Paul and say things like: "But it was a very pagan place that they were living in, all meat bought in the market in those days had been sacrificed to idols".

I am sorry But that is not a defense. Paul was not talking about buying meat in the markets... For Paul says in verse 10: "eating in an idol's temple". The only time you eat in an idols temple is in celebration and worship of that idol. What on earth would a believer and follower of YHVH and disciple of His servant Yehoshua be doing participating in a celebratory feast in an idols temple??? How un-Christ-like!!!

When the Jewish believers were trying to decide whether Gentiles needed to obey the Mosaic Law, they concluded that avoiding food sacrificed to idols is more important than circumcision, tithing, fasting, and Surprisingly, "Do not murder" didn't make their list either, but "abstain from food sacrificed to idols" did.

All the prohibitions in the Acts 15 letter, are related to the participation in the temple worship ceremonies of idols - eating sacrificial meat, drinking sacrificial blood, strangling your sacrifice to the idol and eating it with the blood still in it, sex with temple prostitutes. The command from James, "You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality" is one command. not four. The command to not have anything to do with idol worship.

But notice that there is another sin that seems to go 'hand in hand' with the idolatrous practice of eating food sacrificed to idols in these verses...

The sin of 'sexual immorality'.

Sexual immorality was an important act of worship in many of the the temples of the false gods and goddesses. Even today, shrines of fertility and seduction gods and goddesses have people who render their services as male and female temple prostitutes.

Don't have anything to do with idols!!!

Don't follow the teachings of Paul.

Don't worship idols by eating with the idolaters in the sacrificial meals.

If Pauls teachings are contrary to those of YAHU'SHUA (Jesus) or the prophets, most christians will take Pauls teachings in the place of The Christ's. That makes Paul 'än-te'-khre-stos' (antichrist). Most people think the word antichrist in the bible refers to 'opposite of Christ' but it also means 'instead of' or 'in the place of' Christ. Any teaching that people follow instead of Christ's is an 'än-te'-khre-stos teaching, and any teacher they listen to in the place of Christ is 'än-te'-khre-stos

For most Christians Paul is 'än-te'-khre-stos. And they don't even realize it.

What Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:10 "For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple" is absolutely ludicrous.

The one with a "weak conscience" is the one Not eating in an idol's temple???

The one eating in an idol's temple has some sort of superior knowledge over his weak brother who thinks that it is wrong to partake in idol celebratory feasts???

1 Corinthians 8:10 SHOULD READ... "For if anyone WITH A CONSCIENCE sees you who have NO CONSCIENCE eating in an idol's temple"

Paul is using exactly the same modus operandi as Satan used in the garden of Eden.

Where does this so-called 'superior revelatory knowledge' come from? The enemy of YHVH... That's where! (Satan's so-called deep secrets - Revelation 2:24)

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies".

Acts 22:9 "And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. Acts 26:13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 2 Corinthians 11:14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

According to 'The Dead Sea Scrolls' which the Catholic Church tried to destroy:

The 'Teacher of Righteousness,' or 'Righteous Teacher,' leads a Messianic Movement befuddled by "the Spouter of Lies, who leads many astray in order to build his city of vanity ON BLOOD and erect an Assembly upon Lying, for the sake of his glory, tiring out many with a worthless service and instructing them in works of Lying, so that their works will be of Emptiness. And they will be brought to the same Judgements of Fire with

which they insulted and vilified the Elect of God," (Habakkuk Peshar 10:9-13). Unlike the Spouter of Lies ("who led the simple astray"), the Righteous Teacher "expounded the Law to his Council and to all who freely pledged themselves to join the Elect of God TO KEEP THE LAW in the Council of the Community, WHO SHALL BE SAVED on the Day of Judgement," (Micah Peshar fragment).

Paul:

Romans 4:2For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

James:

James 2:20But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. 24You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

“Our lord and prophet, who has sent us, declared to us that the Evil One, having disputed with him for forty days, but failing to prevail against him, promised that he would send Apostles from among his subjects to deceive them. Therefore, above all, remember to shun ANY APOSTLE, TEACHER OR PROPHET WHO DOES NOT ACCURATELY COMPARE HIS TEACHING WITH JAMES...the brother of our Lord...and this, even if he comes to you with recommendations,” (Homilies of Clement’ 11.35).

Knowing Jesus would soon depart from them, his disciples, according to the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, asked him who would lead them, "And Jesus said to them, 'In the place you are to go, go to James the Righteous, for whose sake Heaven and Earth came into existence,'" (Gospel of Thomas 12).

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

James 1:27Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

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**Thanks Be To YHVH For His Everlasting Love And Mercy Toward Us
And To YAHU'SHUA His Servant, Who Revealed To Us The Kingdom Of Heaven
And Paid For It With His Life**

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

John 10:11-13 11"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. 12"He who is a

hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13"He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

Matthew 24:9"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10"At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12"Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. 14"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

24"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25"Behold, I have told you in advance.

34"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

John 14:1"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Revelation 7:16"They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

YHVH bless you, and keep you;
YHVH make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
YHVH lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.'

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