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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 60

HIS ENDURING SIGNIFICANCE

Among all the Apostles chosen by Jesus Himself, it is Paul alone who laid forth the teachings that form the doctrinal foundation of the church. A few other Apostles wrote epistles in our New Testament, but none taught it as did Paul. He alone used the scriptures (Old Testament) to connect to the teachings of Jesus and to give us clear and solid reasons for our faith, beliefs, and doctrinal teachings.

What are some of these things to be credited to Paul?

First, there is salvation by faith alone; works do not and cannot save us. Others such as Peter or Elder James felt works still were a necessary part of it. They excused gentiles from being circumcised due only to Paul's intervention, but they still believed that someone born into a Jewish family but became a Christian still had to be circumcised; and that is works, not faith alone.

It is only Paul who taught the twelve gifts of the Holy Spirit. He alone emphasized the importance of speaking in other tongues from Holy Spirit. It is he who taught of the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.

It was Paul who spoke of order in the church. He is the only one who taught of the gifts Jesus gave to the church of the five-fold ministry: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.

The epistles he wrote to each church were copied and passed around from church to church. This is what unified the church over time. Without those letters (epistles) many heresies would have sprung up and the young church would have been so split up and divided that it could not have moved forward very long.

This was the reason why Jesus met him on the Damascus Road to call him into Apostleship. None of the other eleven apostles were as uniquely qualified as Paul. He was a master student of the Old Covenant. He had the zeal and fervor to do God's work. He was both intellectual and practical. He had the personality and strong will that it would require to complete the task. We would not have what we have today were it not for him.

I believe that he was the twelfth Apostle called by Jesus. (Judas Iscariot disqualified himself and Matthias was not called by Jesus.) The number twelve is significant.

This concludes our two-month study of Paul.