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THE TWO WAYS OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

CHAPTER 1

GRACE AND "THE OTHER GOSPEL"

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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."

Galatians 1:6-8

If I were to point my finger at you or one of your friends, while in a crowd, and say "Let him be accursed!", there would be few, if any, in the crowd whose emotions would not be deeply stirred. Such a statement would guarantee conflict, not only between the two of us but within the entire crowd. Even reading a hypothetical statement, such as the one I've just given, stirs the emotions and a bell rings in the mind to signal danger, caution, trouble. We set our defenses, our attention is riveted and our senses respond with maximum effort to ascertain the magnitude of the problem, to contain it, and to solve it.

Paul's statement in Gal. 1:8, "Let him be accursed", is a similar situation. Knoch's translation says, "Let him be anathema." Moffatt's translation says, "God's curse be on him." The statement could be no stronger. Paul does not mince words to tell us there are two gospels and that he is firmly on the side of the gospel of grace and at war with those promoting "the other gospel". To make the point emphatic Paul repeats his conclusion in the following verse.

If the Christian church did not face the same conflict today, Paul's statement would, perhaps, best be forgotten. No one likes conflict or the thought of conflict in his life. But it is there and cannot be ignored. As with the first century church, so also today there is conflict in the church. There is the gospel that leads us into the grace of Christ, and there is "another" (the Greek word heteros is used in Gal. 1:6, meaning "another, of a different kind") gospel, which is not "another" (the Greek word allos is used in Gal. 1:7, meaning "another, of the same kind"). The "heteros" gospel does not lead us into the grace of Christ but away from the grace of Christ.

To begin examining the conflict involved over Paul's "two gospels", the cautious approach seems best, for I seek no conflict with the reader. Like dynamite, the subject needs to be handled gently and carefully in order to be useful and yet not damage the user. What is presented is not a final verdict on the matter. It is a case for grace. It is a case in support of the gospel that Paul and his associates preached, the gospel contrasted to "any other gospel" (Gal. 1:6-9). It is my hope that you will weigh the evidence carefully and return a verdict in favor of the gospel of grace.

If the issue were not so critical, it would be best to present the case briefly and move on. However, because the issue is so critical, the calm approach seems called for rather than a hurried one. Tangential observations, hunches, partial information, personal experience, as well as hard evidence, may all help to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this enemy called conflict. The subject is safely studied only by letting "the peace of God rule in our hearts" (Col. 3:15).

Preliminary Comments

Allow me to start my report from a great distance away. When I was a child, it seemed to me that there were only two kinds of boys in the world- those who wanted to play in the sandbox and those who wanted to destroy what the players had built. There were only good guys and bad guys. Life was simple and fun. It consisted of playing in the sandbox.

There was no stress. The only demands were a call for lunch or supper and an occasional warning to play nice or not wander too far. Since a spanking awaited any serious breeches of obedience, it was not difficult to comply. If the destroyers would come around to wreck havoc with the sandbox, they were driven away (by me if they were small enough). If they were too big, a high volume bellow would bring "The Enforcer", my mom, immediately to my rescue.

It was a grand time. There was no worry, no fear, no subtlety. Sometimes the good guys became bad guys and the bad guys good. But, that state of affairs never seemed to last very long. My friends and I knew who the good guys were and who the bad guys were and if we were in doubt, we kept comparing observations until we were sure. Life was preeminently simple. It consisted of discovering, experiencing, comparing, snooping, questioning, learning, PLAYING! Paul's words, "let him be accursed" would have been dismissed by us as "grown up stuff".

When mom would say, "why don't you go out and play?", my response was always to think, "what a GRAND IDEA!". There was never an argument over that suggestion nor a need to request that the word "play" be defined. Play covered everything! What a brilliant suggestion! "Yes, mama, I most certainly will go out and play," was my instantaneous response.

Time went by, as if by magic. There was no thought of it, no keeping track of it, no worry over "wasting" it, it just somehow went by. And with the passing of time, a great evil crept into my life. It was some nebulous, yet real, enemy to the only thing in life that I knew, play. It was called "work". I didn't understand it. But, it made everything change. Had I heard Paul's words, "let him be accursed" at this time, I probably would have said, "he's talking about work!"

Play was now bad because work was good. Fun was now gone because "the chores" had to be done. Enthusiasm gave way to plodding. "Go mow the lawn" was not met with "what a GREAT IDEA". It was met with resistance. Even when the instruction was framed as a suggestion, "why don't you go mow the lawn?", I could tell that it was not a great idea but rather a bad idea. It was WORK, that dreaded enemy of play.

It took a long, long time before that enemy of mine was finally conquered. It still comes around when I'm least expecting it. But, when my play is seriously threatened, I get angry and attack it with every weapon I can find. Sometimes I don't even fight fair. But then, my enemy doesn't fight fair either. He doesn't even call himself by the right name! His name isn't work at all. His name is CONTROL! No wonder I had such a problem with him. I didn't know him at all-not even his right name.

So, I started examining the facts that I knew about work and play to see just where the differences lay. Play was fun. Why? Well, there was love in it. I knew that my mom loved me when she said, "why don't you go out and play?" Love suffers long and is kind. Never did my mom get impatient with my play. Never did she destroy the castles I made in the sandbox.

Work was a different thing altogether. Mowing the lawn could be fun- except there was no love in the command, "go mow the lawn". Neither did there seem to be much patience on the part of my parents when I took too long to finish my assigned chores. My mom never got provoked when I played but my work seemed to offer much more opportunity for provocation. Neither was she discouraged by my play. But, work was different.

And so, as I grew up I mowed the lawn many times. Sometimes it was play. Sometimes it was work. It was play when I loved to do it. It was work when I was forced to do it. Motive was everything! If my motive

was love, I could play all the time, (even if my actions were misunderstood as work by others). I could do everything "heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto men" (Col. 3:23) if my motive was love.

A friend of mine also mowed his families lawn. His experience was different than mine. His dad asked him to mow the lawn one time and he didn't, but rather went off to do something else. When he came back, his dad was mowing the lawn and he felt so bad that he never again refused his fathers request. With him, mowing the lawn was something he did because if he didn't do it his father would have to do it. And, he knew his father loved him. So, his motive was always love when he mowed the lawn. It was PLAY!

Life became more complex as sandbox time receded into the clouds of yesterday. My world grew in size and it became more difficult to separate the good guys from the bad guys. A vast grey area appeared and was filled with too many people for me to classify. I developed a test to help me deal with this uncomfortable and uncertain grey area.

The test was designed to remove the grey area as far from me as possible. The test was a kind of fence to protect me from the encroachment of those in the grey area. Those who wanted to get close to me had to pass the test. The test was not designed to determine doctrinal positions or ascertain "salvation" status. It was not a litmus test, simplistic to the point of being almost worthless. It was strictly geared toward evaluating behavior. And, more importantly, it was geared to ascertaining the underlying motive of the applicant.

It was a simple test, a test of love. I felt safe with this test because I'd learned that "Love never fails." (I Cor. 13:8). From the grey area came good guys and bad guys as life went on. Many stayed in the grey area for want of a verdict. However, some emerged and became fast friends. They were good guys in my mind regardless of their sometimes bad behavior. They were few. I could trust that their motive was love in spite of visible evidence to the contrary. Some have disappointed me, but not often. Some emerged and became enemies. They were bad guys in my mind regardless of their sometimes good behavior. They also were few. I could trust that their motive was not love in spite of visible evidence to the contrary. Some have surprised me, but not often.

It seems to me that the good guys and the bad guys are always influencing the people in the grey area to go their way. The bad guys want control, superiority, and power over the people. The good guys want love, joy, peace and power given to the people.

I imagine that everyone can identify with my childhood, either by comparison or by contrast. Probably a mixture of the two. Everyone started at the same place. Their experiences differed from mine, but the same themes played through their lives as well. They experienced love. They experienced it's absence. In Paul's words, the absence of love is "accursed". Nothing can grow or prosper. Destruction and desolation are everywhere. The seeds of death are sown in every direction. A plague ensues that is only stopped by love.

Historical Perspective

A child was born into the world about two thousand years ago. He experienced all the things we did when we were children. The same excitement, the same sadness. The same wonder. But, he was different than us because the only father he had was God. His father always loved him- for God is love. This child was Jesus Christ, God's only begotten son. He changed the world by the power of God's love.

A study of His life shows some aspects of love that are not usually associated with love by the world. He got angry. He had a sharp tongue at times. He talked back to his "elders". Some hated him so much that they finally killed him. But, God raised him from the dead in a victory of love over hate.

Fifty days later, less than two months, the church age began and that day about three thousand new born babies came on the scene. They were God's children. The church age had begun. The family of God began

to play. What FUN! The family grew and grew. Thousands upon thousands were added to it. A multitude here, another multitude there. They all played as new born babies will. WHAT FUN! Healings, miracles, signs, wonders. WHAT FUN!

The children were playing and it was wonderful to behold. The children of a loving Father were learning, comparing, contrasting, giggling, laughing, questioning, thriving. They had it made. They shared their toys. They shared their secrets. They shared their discoveries. The book of Acts is the family history of their first thirty or so years.

But, this family history is not about the lives of people born for the first time. It's about the lives of those who were born a second time. Born from above. Born again. It is about those who had an old nature by the first birth and a new nature by the second birth. They were adults by the first birth. They were young children by the second. They could play as children, and they did play, for the first few years. Then some of them were introduced to that wicked enemy of play, WORK!

There is a subtle difference between labor with love and labor without love. Some of God's children did not see the difference. Some did, and may have even recognized the insidious element in work by his real name, CONTROL. Many did not.

God's children were familiar with control from their old nature, their "old man". Some thought the new nature, the new man, should conform to the old. And so, the "old man" in them encouraged the thought and caused the young child to conform. The family of God split in two. Those children who bowed to CONTROL were pitted against God and the rest of His delightfully playing children. Conflict ensued.

Within the first four years or so of the church age, great joy, great deliverance in Jerusalem was mitigated by the deception of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), the fighting between the Grecians and Hebrews (Acts 6), and finally the killing of one of the children, Stephen (Acts 7). The children were scattered (Acts 8). Jerusalem could stand them no longer. Playing was not allowed in Jerusalem.

Somehow it was decided that control must be maintained at all times, and at all cost. Who gained control in Jerusalem at that time is not apparent up through Acts 8:1, when the scattering occurred. It only becomes apparent as Acts continues to unfold the events of the following twenty five years. But, the scattering of the children in Acts 8:1 enlists our sympathy and requires an answer as to how this could happen. Surely there were those in Jerusalem that were not in the family of God and they were involved. But, after examining the first seven chapters of Acts and seeing how many thousands of Christians there were in Jerusalem, it did not seem possible to me that "outsiders" could interfere and dominate unless they had allied to them children from within the family.

What follows is an attempt to dig out from the book of Acts all that may contribute toward defending the children at play. My desire is to minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29), and conflict is not an easy subject to communicate gently. Please bear with me. As a child of God I know only in part and see in part. "At present I know out of an instalment, yet then (when the Lord Jesus Christ returns) I shall recognize according as I am recognized also." (I Cor. 13:12 Knoch).

Mind Pictures

I believe the mind thinks in pictures, not words. Words help develop the picture and change it, but what stays is the picture. As we grow, these mind pictures are modified, corrected, and sometimes drastically changed. Our beliefs and actions are largely determined by the motion picture going on in our minds. That which our senses register is compared to the picture in our minds and if the two don't agree, either the picture in our mind must change or we go to work on the external picture to change it.

Over the past ten years, the picture in my mind of the first century church has undergone radical change. Ten years ago the picture I had of the forty year period from the start of the church age to the final demise of Israel as a nation consisted of a small group of Christians here and a small group there. The picture

showed that these small groups were vastly outnumbered by the "big bad wolves" among whom they lived.

In studying the book of Acts and other literature of that forty year period, I was compelled to change the picture in my mind. The children born into God's family were numerous indeed, more so than had ever been presented to me. Three thousand the first day. Then multitudes. Five thousand a short while later. Then more multitudes and "multiplied" multitudes are recorded in Acts, before Paul was even converted. After his conversion, more multitudes in other cities were converted and whole cities turned out to hear the Word of God spoken by Paul.

As my "mind picture" changed questions crept into my mind such as, "If three thousand believed the first day of the church, how many believed the second day, and the third?" Acts does not specifically answer this question. However, on the first day of the church age we are told there were three thousand and a short while later (whether days or months or a year or two later I do not know) we are told that about five thousand men believed. In between those numbers is no suggestion that the daily activity in God's "maternity ward" dropped off to five or ten "new births" a day. I had to change my mind picture and paint in a much larger maternity ward bustling with activity as thousands upon thousands of new born babies were delivered each day.

Of course with it, the picture in my mind had to change regarding where all these new babies went. The first seven chapters of Acts record activities only in Jerusalem. They cover the first four or five years of the church age in that city. But, many of the early babies were now five years old and had been playing in God's sandbox a good while. And so I had to paint in more maternity wards around the world where many would have returned who came to the required feasts in Jerusalem each year.

By the time Acts 8 began to register, I was painting with broad strokes and a serious intensity. I thought, "what had the five year olds been doing for the past five years?" They were devout people and surely had discovered many things in their study and in comparing notes with their friends. How they must have relished the three times a year when they would go to Jerusalem and visit with their friends from all over the world. And so I painted in excited children saying to each other, "In a week we get to see Joe from Egypt and Pete from Mesopotamia, and Mike from Rome. What fun we'll have."

This mind picture was thrilling to contemplate. For perhaps five years, all Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine of Christ. The word of God prevailed. All the sick were healed. To see such a mind picture was overwhelming. Christianity was not some insignificant thing that affected few people. It was spread world wide within the first five years of the church age and had an impact on the world that has been felt ever since.

But, in the midst of this excitement there was trouble. Acts 5 tells us about Ananias and Sapphira being deceptive. The next chapter tells us of conflict between the Grecians and Hebrews. And in Acts 7, one of God's children, Stephen, is killed. Painting these events into my mind picture was difficult indeed. I could not deny them, but realizing that these people were Christians and were involved in trouble was unpleasant to consider. There was conflict within the Christian community. Only a few years had gone by. What happened?

Logical Considerations

There must have been some bad guys around, "Wolves in sheep's clothing", because the children would have run from wolves without disguise, but not from sheep. How many followed "the big bad wolf"? I don't know. But Jerusalem is not the same after Stephen's death. God's children there are changed. The voice of happy children is gone. A judgmental attitude seems to prevail.

The Sanhedrin gave Stephen a trial, but in the middle of it they could take no more when Stephen reported that he saw Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God. What made them so angry with Stephen that

they cut off his trial and summarily killed him? They sure didn't like the picture Stephen painted of Jesus Christ STANDING on the right hand of God.

After that, Jesus is always pictured as sitting rather than standing. I do not know the purpose behind Stephen presenting the picture of Jesus standing. I suspect that He was ready to return and assume His position as King of Kings and Lord of Lords at that time. If so, Israel as a nation lost its big chance by refusing to listen to Stephen.

The record of Acts goes on after the death of Stephen for about another twenty five years. No more is Jerusalem presented in Acts as a happy place. The apostles stay there for a time. The people try to kill Paul when he goes there in Acts 9. The apostle James (not James, the brother of Jesus) is killed there in Acts 12. In the same chapter Peter is thrown in prison. In Acts 15 representatives from the Jerusalem church trouble the believers in Antioch. In that chapter we learn that a council was held in Jerusalem, attended by the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul. James, the brother of Jesus, is clearly in charge of the Council. He gives his "sentence". Peter asks the council why they are tempting God.

By the time of the council in Jerusalem, about fourteen years had passed since the stoning of Stephen. Around the time of the council we are told that the same thing happened among the other nations of the world as had happened to Israel in the first five years of the church age. Deliverance, miracles, and growth unprecedented were experienced among the Gentile nations of the world. Paul says in Colossians 1:6 that the gospel was preached "in all the world".

The events recorded in Acts indicated a much larger church among the Gentiles than I had previously thought possible. In Syrian Antioch a great number believed and turned to the Lord. In Roman Antioch, almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God and the word of the Lord was published throughout the region. In Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth and Ephesus we are told that multitudes believed.

The Evidence Comes Together

In Acts 19:20 we read, "And so mightily grew the word of God and PREVAILED!" The picture is thrilling and awesome to contemplate. As in Jerusalem during the first few years of the church age, so also in other cities the Word of God prevailed. But, Acts 19:23 tells us, "The same time there arose no small stir about that way." "Two Ways" become apparent in Acts as the church grew and time went by.

One "Way" was the way of the Jerusalem church, of which James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader. James says in Acts 21:20, "Thou seest, brother,(talking to Paul) how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law." The record goes on to show that the people in Jerusalem tried their best to kill Paul. The other "Way" was the way referred to in Acts 19:23. It was the way that Paul represented. It becomes increasingly apparent that the two "Ways" conflicted.

After the council in Jerusalem, Peter goes to Antioch and we are told that Peter removes himself from the Gentiles when representatives from James come to Antioch (Gal. 2:12). His motive is fear of James! James was not evidently a man of compassion, he was the head of the "circumcision party" in Jerusalem and was feared. To consider the fact that Peter feared anyone in the Christian church is a very difficult thing to consider. In the light of all the miracles he did and his overwhelming popularity in Jerusalem during at least the first four years of the church age, to see that Peter feared James, the brother of Jesus, only fifteen years later, is hard to believe. And yet, not only did Peter remove himself from the Gentiles when representatives from James came to Antioch, all the Jews with him did likewise, including Barnabas.

For most of my life, I assumed that James, the brother of Jesus, was somehow associated with the rest of the "leadership" of the first century church in an amicable and loving way. That assumption had no basis in fact. The evidence points in the opposite direction. It points to conflict between James on the one hand and Paul on the other. There is no clear evidence that James was even "born again". There is clear

evidence that James rejected Jesus Christ throughout His pre-resurrection ministry. James was certainly familiar with all that Jesus Christ did and said, and yet he did not believe as Jesus clearly states, "For neither did his brethren (brothers) believe in Him" (Jn. 7:5). If James was converted after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have no record of that conversion. We are told that James saw Jesus Christ after the resurrection and are therefore inclined to believe that salvation is implied in that fact. However, he saw Jesus many times before the resurrection and still did not believe, and we must conclude that seeing Jesus does not imply believing in Him.

James tells us he was "a servant of Jesus Christ" (James 1:1), but how he served Him can only be discovered from examining his "service" in Acts and comparing his statements in the epistle of James to those of Paul in Acts and Paul's epistles. His "service" is certainly a contrast to Paul's "service". And, the most striking element in the contrast is that not one miracle is recorded that was done at the hand of James. In any event, it is hard to believe that James was not "born again". In the light of Acts, it does not seem that near as many were "unsaved" as I had previously supposed, in Jerusalem, or among the dispersion. What follows will hopefully make this clear.

Knoch's translation renders Acts 21:20, "You are beholding, brother, how many tens of thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and all are inherently zealous for the law." If this be true, James was the leader of not a small minority among the nation of Israel, but a large minority or perhaps a majority. James was in control of a large group of Christians.

Peter feared James by about 50 A.D. and Paul had to be escorted out of Jerusalem by a huge Roman guard about 57 A.D. (a Jerusalem in which James resided and in which there were thousands or tens of thousands of "believers" at the time of Paul's visit in Acts 21). James advice to Paul, when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, is not "sound doctrine" and does not work. By the end of Acts it becomes clear that James and Paul are not on the same side at all.

Paul draws a contrast in Galatians between "children of the bondwoman" and "children of the freewoman". It appears that Paul's "children of the bondwoman" (Gal. 4:23-31) were the children in God's family that were "zealous of the law". They were God's children. They were saved. They were true children of Abraham just as Ishmael was. Paul does not appear to be referring to the unsaved Jews that did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He appears to be talking about those children who were "zealous of the law." These children did not want the children from among the other nations of the world, as well as those Jews who believed as Paul did, (the "children of the freewoman"), to have the same status as themselves. They wanted the Gentiles "saved" but only according to their rules and under their authority. And, they were obviously jealous of the thought that the children of the freewoman could be on a par with them. It seems to me that the children of the bondwoman just could not accept in their hearts and minds that only one leader was allowed in God's family and that leader was Jesus Christ. All of God's children had access to Him directly. Paul speaks of this reality extensively in his epistles. He didn't try to control the lives of God's children.

It appears that James did try to control the lives of God's children. A careful study of Acts shows that it is not merely a record of the growth of the early church. Almost half of Acts is devoted to only three instances of conflict (the events surrounding the death of Stephen, the events surrounding the conversion of the household of Cornelius, and the events surrounding Paul's final trip to Jerusalem). The record of Acts clearly shows that the first century church was not all harmoniously joined together as the church grew and spread to the ends of the earth. It clearly shows "Two Ways" in the church of the first century. The one way represented by Peter and Paul. The other represented by James. One was the "Liberty Church" whose members were "children of the freewoman". The other was the "Bondage Church" whose members were "children of the bondwoman". Acts shows a striking contrast between the two.

The book of Acts starts with the "Liberty Church" in Jerusalem and shows how that church was overshadowed by the "Bondage Church". It then shows the rise of the "Liberty Church" among the other nations of the world and how the "Bondage Church" tried to limit their liberty as well. Understanding Paul's epistles in this light should open worlds of understanding that were perhaps dark and cloudy before.

Seeing conflict in the first century church leads to the conclusion that the Christian's major problems today do not come from outside the church but from inside the church. The unsaved merely dismiss the Christian message as inconceivable. The saved fight bitterly at times over doctrine and practice. The issue always seems to reduce to deliverance and Liberty versus captivity and Bondage.

Listed below are some "pieces of evidence" regarding James that suggest he was in conflict with Paul. I am confident that there is more evidence than I've listed. There always is when one of the "good ole boys" is found out and the spotlight focused on him. The list given below is in no particular order.

Summary of the Evidence

1. Peter was afraid of James (Gal. 2:12)
2. James rises in prominence as the Jerusalem church decays.
3. Jesus said, "the world cannot hate you" to James. (John 7:7)
4. James and his brothers thought Jesus was crazy. (Mark 3:21)
5. James gave his brother Jesus no honor (Mark 6:4)
6. Jesus did not pick James to be an apostle, nor was he chosen to replace Judas in Acts 1.
7. James' "sentence" in Acts 15 seems contrary to sound doctrine and "seemed good to the holy spirit" in verse 28 is not convincing as having been sanctioned by God.
8. James' advice to Paul in Acts 21 seems to be the "kiss of Judas"
9. James was of the circumcision party (Gal.2:12)
10. Paul said "those whoseemedtobe somewhat in conference (at the Jerusalem Council) added nothing to me"(Gal.2:6)
11. God raises up Paul soon after Stephen is killed and the believers are scattered. James stays in Jerusalem throughout Acts while Paul ends up almost killed there and Peter ends up in Babylon or Rome(I Pet.5:13).
12. Paul distances himself from the Jerusalem church (Gal. 1)
13. Peter is resisted in Jerusalem after the household of Cornelius is saved. (Acts 10 and 11)
14. Peter is jailed in Jerusalem while James is not among the "certain of the church" that Herod vexed. (Acts 12)
15. Barnabas and Paul fight over John Mark's return to Jerusalem, presumably to report the events surrounding the conversion of Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:13 and 15:36-41).
16. The epistle of James was not added to the canon of Scripture until 367 A.D.. The book of Acts and Paul's epistles were always accepted.
17. The epistle of James contradicts Paul's epistles.
18. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not mentioned in the book of James and the content of James does not depend on the resurrection.
19. The epistle of James was placed before that of Peter in the New Testament even though Peter's apostolic ministry is clearly demonstrated in Acts while James' "ministry" is not defined in Acts by miracles, signs and wonders, but rather by control. No first century evidence exists of him demonstrating the power of God in any way.

20. James says, "you see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24) while Paul says, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28) and "no man is justified by the law in the sight of God." (Gal.3:21)
21. James tells people not to become teachers (in James 3:1, the word "masters" should be translated "teachers") whereas Paul encourages people to become teachers (I Cor. 12:31)
22. James was not a comfort to Paul (Col. 4:10-11)
23. James did not leave Jerusalem upon the persecution in Acts 8:1 but was still there in Acts 12:17 and thereafter throughout the book of Acts.
24. The "certain men" that came down from Judea in Acts 15:1 were not immediately overruled by the Jerusalem church but instead a council had to be called.
25. James statement in Acts 15:21 seems incriminating.
26. The book of Romans and the book of Hebrews seem to clearly stand against James advice to Paul in Acts 21:20-25.
27. Paul makes a point in Gal.1 that he did not go to Jerusalem to see James even though he did see him while he was there (his first trip to Jerusalem).
28. Two translations of Gal. 1:19 (Moffatt and Knoch) make clear that James was not an apostle.
29. Martin Luther called the epistle of James "the epistle of straw" and forbid its use in the University of Wittenburg.
30. Josephus indicates that James was well respected in Jerusalem at the time of his death in about 62 A.D.. Paul was hated there and imprisoned in 57 A.D..

The following examination of the book of Acts is presented with the above facts in mind. Some of these facts can be reasoned away by those who wish to defend James, but all of them together are difficult to dismiss. They are a formidable indictment.

The general arguments in defense of James are two in number. The first says that James must have been a good guy because he was the head of the church in Jerusalem. But, Jesus said, "Many shall come in my name saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many." (Matt.25:5). The second argument says that surely James must have been a "good guy" because he saw Jesus after the resurrection. But, Jesus said, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). These verses do not necessarily refer to James, but they do counter the general arguments used in support of James and tend to show that they are arguments without substance.

James is presented in the book of Acts as a person in control, not as a person who does miracles, suffers persecution or teaches the Word of God. He replaces the apostles in Jerusalem so that by the time of Peter's removing himself from the Gentiles in Galatians 2, James is someone to be feared. Paul, on the other hand, is presented as one who does suffer persecution, does teach the Word of God, and does demonstrate the power of God. There is a striking silence regarding Paul's asserting any amount of control over any believers. He appears always as one who considers others as his peers rather than as his subordinates and encourages them to do God's will, not his own. He makes requests rather than giving orders and there is no evidence that he ever desired to centralize the church or control it.



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