

Bitter Opposition to the Epistles

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PREFACE

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation—abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

DISCLAIMER

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It is really **impossible to understand and appreciate** the epistles of the Apostle Paul without understanding the opposition to the message of grace which he preached, because the epistles are the answer to the many questions and problems which the opposition raised. Without thoroughly knowing this opposition, it is like trying to solve a mathematical problem with having only the answer but not knowing what the answer means.

Many problems and questions had arisen in the Acts of the Apostles as to whether the Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised and having to keep The Law of Moses. In other words, it was a question whether a Gentile could become a Christian **without first becoming a Jewish proselyte and accepting the Jewish faith** with all of its rites and customs. Was Christianity rejecting the Old Testament? This, with many other questionable things, is what it seemed that Christianity was doing.

This great battle against the message of the grace of God **also raged in the Gospel of John** as well as in the Acts of the Apostles, because Christ's message in the Gospel of John was also the message of grace. In the Gospel of John, it was **a contest between the religion of works of the Mosaic Law, defended so bitterly by the Pharisees, or the gospel of faith**, so gloriously offered by Christ. In the eyes of the Jews and the religious leaders, it was a **controversy between Moses and Christ**:

- Which were the people to follow?
- Which was the message for this age for The Church?

This **battle continued**, and came to a white heat in the Acts of the Apostles. There you can see that the Jews and the religious leaders were determined to completely stamp out Christianity with this gospel of grace, if possible. **Why?** We shall see.

Why were the Jews so bitterly opposed to this message of grace?

1. They opposed it because it was **new**, and they couldn't believe that God was introducing any new gospel.
2. They believed that it was against Moses, and anything against Moses threw them into a rage, because **it was Moses in whom they trusted** [Joh.5.45].
3. They believed that Christians were **blaspheming God** because they claimed that Jesus was the Son of God [Joh.6.69].
4. They believed that it was **doing away** with the glorious promises and hope of Israel in the Messiah's coming kingdom.
5. They thought that Paul and the Jewish Christians were **traitors to their nation**.
6. They couldn't believe that Jesus could be the Messiah, because He **died a malefactor's death** on a cross between 2 thieves.
7. They couldn't believe that Jesus was the Christ, because He **didn't manifest Himself as the King of Israel** and deliver them from the tyranny of Rome.
8. They believed that the Gospel of Grace was **immoral**, because it taught that salvation was not of The Law, or of works, but was of free grace and only by faith [Eph.2:8-9].

9. They couldn't believe that a holy **God could justify an ungodly sinner** through grace by faith in Christ's redemption [Rom.3:24].
10. They were **jealous** of the Gentiles for accepting this universal gospel [Act.13:44-45].
11. They couldn't believe that the uncircumcised Gentiles could be accepted in the family of God on the **very same equality** as the Jews. Unthinkable! [Act.15:1,5]
12. They believed that Christianity had **no authority** because it had no visible priesthood, nor did it have any temple (Christians worshipped mostly in homes), and no holy days and ceremonies as the Jews had, and apparently no covenant of promise [Act.4:7].
13. They despised it because in their eyes many of its preachers were **ignorant** and **untrained**.
14. They disdained it because most of the believers in this new gospel were **of the lower class, even slaves!** [1Co.1:26-29]
15. But all of these objections to the gospel of the grace of God, and many more, are easily and thoroughly answered in the Apostle Paul's epistles.

THE CHART

THE MYSTERY IN THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENT OF PAUL'S EPISTLES

I believe a further word of explanation about the chart should be made: When the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles, we must remember that he gave no word of instruction as to how they should be arranged, but left this up to the men of God who lived after him. So, we can see that the present arrangement of his epistles in our Bible was not something done against his expressed will and wishes. In fact, we cannot help but feel that he would be pleased with the men who placed the book of Romans first, and his other epistles in the order in which we find them in our Bible.

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