

For if I Yet Pleas'd Men, I Should Not Be the Servant of Christ.

by Martin Luther

Paul's actions were motivated by charitable regard for weak brethren, but were criticized by false apostles who sought to bring him into disrepute.

Scripture: Acts 18:18, Acts 21:26, Romans 2:29, Romans 14:13, 1 Corinthians 9:22, Galatians 2:3, Galatians 5:1

Topics: "Apostle Paul", "False Doctrine"

Description

Martin Luther discusses how false apostles cleverly tried to discredit Paul by pointing out apparent contradictions in his actions, such as circumcising Timothy and observing ceremonial laws. Paul's actions were out of consideration for the weak brethren, not to preach the Law or circumcision. The false apostles twisted Paul's intentions to make him appear unfavorable to the Jews, who would have praised him if he had preached legalism. Luther emphasizes the importance of understanding the context and motives behind Paul's actions to avoid misinterpretation and false accusations.

Transcript

Observe the consummate cleverness with which the false apostles went about to bring Paul into disrepute. They combed Paul's writings for contradictions (our opponents do the same) to accuse him of teaching contradictory things. They found that Paul had circumcised Timothy according to the Law, that Paul had purified himself with four other men in the Temple at Jerusalem, that Paul had shaven his head at Cenchrea. The false apostles slyly suggested that Paul had been constrained by the other apostles to observe these ceremonial laws. We know that Paul observed these decora out of charitable regard for the weak brethren. He did not want to offend them.

But the false apostles turned Paul's charitable regard to his disadvantage.

If Paul had preached the Law and circumcision, if he had commended the strength and free will of man, he would not have been so obnoxious to the Jews. On the contrary they would have praised his every action.

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