

Survey of Galatians: Lesson TWO

Review Material:

- As a way of reminder, here are a few of the relevant facts to the of Galatians that we will continue to refresh ourselves on with each lesson:
- The threat at hand is that the faith of these (mostly gentile) brethren was being undermined by Judaizing teachers:
 - They essentially had two goals:
 - **First**, to bind the keeping of the Old Law on Gentiles as a condition of their being a part of God's people
 - **Second**, to undermine the Apostle Paul to an extent that he had no authority or credibility:
- In response, Paul essentially has three arguments to make:
 - **Chapters 1 and 2** *Paul is a true apostle and his message is from God*
 - **Chapters 3 and 4:** *We are not justified by the law but faith in Christ Jesus*
 - **Chapters 5 and 6:** *Claiming to live in the spirit, means we must walk by the spirit*

Chapter One in a Nutshell:

- Chapter one paints a very unattractive picture of the brethren at Galatia: They have given up on the Gospel that Paul delivered to them, seemingly without putting up any fight;
- They willingly allowed themselves to be deceived by a perverted Gospel, apparently caught up in some physical aspect of the speaker:
 - CH 1 begins Paul's first argument, and it is in vs 13-14 Paul offers the first of three proofs for his argument: **His Jewish background:** no person or situation in his past that would have equipped him to do the work he had been doing
 - Verses 15-24 offer his second proof: **His conversion and the events that followed:** The point that he is seeking to make here is that he is not simply mimicking what the other Apostles or believers told him to say: after his conversion there was no opportunity to receive such teaching: His message was absolutely from God and that meant that it carried absolute authority.
 - Paul is still arguing this second proof when the text of chapter two begins:

Galatians Chapter Two:

Verses 1-2

- In chapter one, as Paul is seeking to show that he did not receive his message from men, he points out that immediately after his conversion, he had no contact with the brethren in Jerusalem (1:7-18)

- It was not until 3 years later that he took a journey there, and even then saw very few Christians:

- Chapter two continues by stating that Paul did not go back to the city for another 14 years:

- The occasion for this seems to fit best with the Jerusalem council: **Acts**

15:1-2 read *Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.*

- As in Galatians, Barnabas is listed as Paul's traveling companion: the circumstances under discussion also fit with the subject Paul is discussing with these brethren, as well as the events that Paul will discuss in vs 3-5

- **By Revelation:**

- It is important to make note of a couple of phrases in verse 2 as they relate to Paul's second Proof:

- The first is that whatever advice the brethren may have given him about going to Jerusalem, it was not the word of man that was the deciding factor in his visit: Paul states that it was by **Revelation:**

- This is important because those critics of Paul who sought to undermine his authority and minimize his importance could latch on to this and say; see, Paul isn't a real apostle; he has to go to Jerusalem whenever the true Apostles summon him;

- The second is what Paul says when he met with the other Apostles and Disciples there: **He submitted the gospel preached among the Gentiles.**

- If Paul had been an impostor or a fraud; his conversation may have went like this: *“why don’t you tell me the Gospel you’ve been preaching, and I’ll let you know if thats what I’ve been saying too...”*
- But Paul was not taught; he id not receive a message: **he gave a message** and it was confirmed.

- **Those are the first** two verses in context: as a side point I’d once again reference what we said here in chapter one: It should be our goal to closely mirror what Paul is saying: The message that we preach and teach to others shouldn’t simply be our imitation of what we’ve heard from others.
- We should seek to possess the quality that made the Bereans noble, searching the scriptures every day to see if the things spoke were true:
 - If we are diligent students of God’s Word, and know what the Bible teaches and where it teaches it; we will not fall victim to the charge of: well you’re just holding on to such and such tradition.... or you’re only saying what your parents, or this or that preacher has taught:
 - If we study to make it our own then like Paul we can say that the Gospel we preach comes from God:

Verses 3-5

- What these verses bear out is that upon their arrival in Jerusalem, there was a situation that arose where some Judaizing teachers were attempting to force circumcision on Titus:
 - Titus, unlike Timothy, had no Jewish heritage; He was a complete gentile; And although these false brethren tried to force this issue, **v 3** is stating that the Apostles and the other brethren supported Paul, by refusing to force circumcision on Titus even though he was a Gentile: *and in doing so gave their stamp of approval, of sorts, to the Gospel Paul had preached to the Gentiles:*
- So the issue Paul says in verse 4, was only made an issue, because of wicked men:
 - Paul goes so far as to say that they are “false” or “pretend”... He is calling into question their faith, and says that their true purpose in being there was to act as a spy to the “liberty” given to the Gentiles; for the purpose of enslaving them:

- In other words; lets get a list of all of the parts of the law that Paul and others are trying to say that these Gentiles don't have to keep, so that we can then follow behind and make sure we try and bind these on Gentiles.
- Paul's attitude in **v 5** stands out as a very stark contrast to that of the Galatian brethren from **1:6**
 - Whereas they were very carefree with their stand for the truth, Paul refused to budge even an inch because of the damage he knew it would do for the cause of Christ:
 - It wasn't a small compromise to Paul: Any compromise was to be seen as a return to slavery:
 - It didn't matter the size, or the time; to compromise at all was a complete betrayal of the truth
- **Those are verses 3-5** in context: Lets draw a couple of observations from the text as some side points:
 - The situation described in verses 3-4 is one where The Apostles had spoken and God had clearly revealed his will in a matter: and Yet despite this, there were brethren who were intent on binding their will also:
 - If I'm not careful; I can be guilty of the same thing: God has fully revealed His will to us in His word about what He expects of His people: I don't have any business adding on my opinions or expectations: Its not God's will + Seth's desires of what People should do:
- This doesn't mean that we don't take a firm stand for the truth: verse 5 is that contrast. When it is a matter of truth, we refuse to budge:
 - But this calls for me to have the diligence spoken of earlier, so that I know the difference between truth that God has bound, and man's ideas and opinions that someone else is trying to bind.
 - This is a serious matter: while the matter up for discussion is the Law, there is no indication that the application stops there: The consequences would be the same; trying to bind additional thoughts and ideas to the Gospel results in bondage:

Verses 7-10

- Paul uses three phrases to refer to Peter, John, and James: Those of high reputation, those of reputation, and those reputed to be pillars:
 - One could read these verses and walk away with the impression that Paul was either bitter toward these apostles, and had an inferiority complex, or that perhaps these men thought that they were big shots:
 - Neither of these are what Paul is saying:
- Remember that he is speaking to the authenticity of his message and apostleship, as well as his authority.
 - The point is that these were the men that the church in Jerusalem looked up to; these were the authority figures. And even though they were in these positions they did not give commands or order Paul;
 - They did not act as his teachers or instructors;
 - The only thing they did do was stand beside Paul when these false brethren tried to circumcise Timothy.
- The only “instructions” if you can call it that; were that Paul remember the poor; I believe that in context this is most likely referring to the poor in Jerusalem, a mission that Paul took great care to carry out: But even this was already a part of his work and desire:

- **I’d only say this as a side point;** It is possible that many of the brethren had built up these men to a high pedestal. If we can keep from doing that to preachers and teachers, no matter how much we think of them, it will go a long way to keeping us from falling into the trap of chapter 1:8-9

Verses 11-14

- This is the third and final proof for Paul’s first argument: **His confrontation with Peter.**
- Paul’s desire is not to put Peter down, nor is it to shame him over a resolved issue:
- It isn’t that Paul is seeking to build himself up or develop a reputation, but rather; if Paul was somehow inferior to other Apostles, would Peter endure this open rebuke by Paul?
- If Paul’s gospel to the gentiles was legitimate, and God really had accepted them; would Peter have really considered himself to have been condemned?