

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
2:1-10
“Desired Destination”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-2 Founding fathers

III. Vs. 3-5 False brethren

IV. Vs. 6-10 Added nothing to me

I. Intro.

There are several differences between the tone of this chapter and the tone of chapter 1:

- a. The subject is not the source of the Gospel but the nature of the Gospel (it is apart from Judaism and circumcision).
- b. Paul’s relationship with the authority of the early church (harmony and unity)

Through it all Paul maintained **the balance of tenacity and humility**, like *a tame tiger* Paul wouldn’t budge on his position but neither would he devour his opponents. **It wasn’t just about being right, sense the gospel was true he must also behave right while defending its validity**. In Elmer Davis’ book “*But We Were Born Free*” he makes this observation with regards to the United States and its sovereignty, “*This will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.*” Paul could have uttered the same sentiments with regards to the gospel that was under attack from the Judaizers. Paul’s first fight for Christian freedom from the law was in Acts 15 mentioned here. His 2nd altercation came later and is the subject of Galatians 2:11-21. Had Paul been unwilling to be of the mindset of the “*home of the brave*” the Church as we know it

would have never have made it outside of the first century. His courage has kept the gospel free from legalism and has carried it to us Gentiles.

II. Vs. 1-2 Founding fathers

Vs. 1-2 According to Acts 14:27 Paul and Barnabas came back excited about what the Holy Spirit had done to open up a door to spread the gospel amongst the gentiles. But they soon found that the open door to the gentiles was meant with a closed door by the Judaizers who said that they gentiles first needed to become Jews before they could become Christians. Circumcision was an important Jewish rite that had been passed down by their patriarch Abraham and symbolized the acceptance and obedience to the whole Jewish Law. Least we think that this is a Jewish problem there are a lot of Christians that have done the same with: Church attendance, bible reading, communion, tithing, Church membership, baptism etc. The first thing Paul mentions is that of timing of this 2nd trip as it was 14 years later after his first which was 3 years after his conversion (around 3 years after Pentecost). What this suggests is that apparently the early church had no problem with the gospel Paul was preaching as they were in no hurry to correct it. He also notes that this 2nd trip was accompanied by two very important witnesses:

- 1. Barnabas:** A close friend of Paul and the one responsible of introducing Paul to the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-28). Like the meaning of his name you always see him encouraging someone. When the gospel began to come primarily to the Hellenistic Jews of Antioch he thought that they would relate better to Paul than others, so he went and fetched him from Tarsus. (Acts 11:25-26) It was Barnabas who accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). And it was Barnabas who encouraged John Mark after he dropped out of the team.

2. Titus: A Gentile convert who worked with Paul after he was won to Christ by Paul (Titus 1:4). He became “*exhibit A*” at the council in Jerusalem of the effect of the gospel among the gentile church’s and why they didn’t need to become Jews first. In his later years he assisted Paul by going to some of the most difficult fellowships to help solve problems.

This is the trip Luke mentions in Acts 11:27-32 when he brought an offering from the Gentile Churches to help with famine relief in Jerusalem. It was at this time he voluntarily spoke to them about the gospel that he was proclaiming to the Gentiles but he did so privately in case he needed to correct some of them that were in leadership positions if there gospel didn’t coincided with the gospel he had received from Jesus. In Acts chapter 10 (a full 10 years after Pentecost) God had used Peter to move the church to welcoming in Gentiles into the folds but through the next 14 years there were some of Jewish background that thought that the only way this should be allowed was if the Gentile first became Jewish converts as they believed that Jesus was only for the Jews. Paul’s greater concern was that his view of the gospel (albeit true) may cause a split in the early church if not handled in humility.

III. Vs. 3-5 False brethren

Vs. 3-5 The mention of Titus being a Greek is to point out that the leadership in the early Church didn’t have a problem with Titus being a believer yet not being circumcised in accordance to Mosaic law. Circumcision (the cutting away of the male foreskin) was the sign of initiation into the Jewish faith and the Mosaic covenant. If a Gentile man wanted to become a Jew, he would have to be circumcised as an adult. All Jewish men were circumcised, and most all Gentile men were not, it was an easy way to refer to “*those*

part of the covenant” and to “*those outside of the covenant of Moses.*” Paul had no problem with circumcision but he insisted that it had no bearing upon a person’s salvation and therefore must not be forced upon Gentiles. Paul calls these people “*false brethren*” who came in secretly. The idea behind the phrase “*false brethren*” is either that they didn’t belong in the church or that they didn’t belong in the meeting to decide gentile conversion. Those that would steal away our freedom and grace in Christ don’t announce their attentions, neither do they lack sincerity for their cause as Paul calls them “*false*” not “*frauds*”. *The religionists crept in to observe the liberty of Paul, Barnabas and Titus; they didn’t come to celebrate it, but to regulate it!* Their issue was not with Paul as he was a Jew who was circumcised on the 8th day of his life. Their issue was with the gospel he preached. This is why Paul would not compromise even for one hour and remained steadfast in the truth. Martin Luther later expressed the same heart: “*Wherefore, God assisting me, my forehead shall be harder than all men’s foreheads. Here I take upon me this title . . . “I give place to none.”*” The historical account of the Council of Jerusalem is in Acts 15:6-21 as several folks presented their case:

- a. **Peter** began as he said it was he whom the Lord chooses to take the gospel to the gentiles in Cornelius (Acts 10) and the Holy Spirit filled them the moment they believed before he had even finished the message. That one act broke down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and clearly God through Jesus was now making the two one in Christ.
- b. **Paul and Barnabas** told the assembly what God had done among the Gentiles in a missionary report and although the false brethren Judaizers argued the

truth was irrefutable, God had done the same thing over and over as He had with Cornelius.

- c. **Titus** was finally brought in as the Judaizers had said that unless a Gentile had submitted to circumcision they couldn't be saved then what did they make of Titus? Here was a saved Gentile who had not been circumcised.
- d. **James**, the leader of the Church in Jerusalem summed up the arguments and the matter was concluded on the side of Paul. It was God's choice to take the gentiles as they were and who were they to try to lay upon them what God had clearly not.

You would think that this would have forever settled the matter but Martin Luther battled the same issues with "*Roman Catholics*", as do those who have to deal with the "*Sabbath keepers*" or the "*membership maintainers*".

IV. Vs. 6-10 Added nothing to me

Vs. 6-10 Four times in this chapter Paul refers to the three major leaders in the early church in Jerusalem, James, Peter and John. But they are alluded to by the use of phrases that describe them as: "*those that were of reputation*" (verse 2), "*those who seemed to be something*" (twice in verse 6), and those "*who seemed to be pillars*" (verse 9). ***Why the differential way of speaking of them?*** It seems as though Paul wanted to deflate the puffed up attitudes that people were prone to have (and still do) of the instruments that God chooses in His wisdom to use. In doing this he is elevating the divine gospel far above the instrument that proclaims it. The instrument is fallible but the Word of God is not! A case in point will be seen next week in Peter and Barnabas' defection at the supper table when the Judaizers came to eat! Though he recognized their calling and authority

and was glad to be working alongside them, they and he were nonetheless human and never to be made “Pope” or “Christ of earth” with their authority equal to the “Word of God”! Calvin writes of verse 8 “*The distinction is interesting, especially because Roman Catholics claim that the Pope is the successor of Peter – but where is his ministry to the Jews? “If Peter’s apostleship pertained peculiarly to the Jews, and as the Pope claims the primacy because he is Peter’s successor, he ought to exercise it over the Jews. Paul is here declared to be the chief apostle of the Gentiles; yet they deny that he was the bishop of Rome.”*

As far as Paul was concerned when it came to the divine origination of the Word of God these three, “added nothing to me”! Not only did the Jerusalem Council agree with Paul’s gospel, they also encouraged his ministry, recognized it publically and sent a letter stating as much. The same gospel was being preached by the Jewish church to Jews as well as by Paul to the gentile church. The church moved from the theological to the practical and wanted the gentile church to continue to help the poor and needy. The Judaizers didn’t not give up and instead at every opportunity after Paul left they would come in to the church and attempt to get folks to add to the gospel. I say if James, Peter and John could add nothing to the gospel or the Word of God then certainly Joseph Smith, the Pope or anyone else stands no chance!