

## **Galatians 2:1-10 - Gospel of Faith Alone Defended from Outsiders**

### **Community Group Galatians Lesson 3**

**I. Ch. 1 Summary: You are Wandering from God's Only Real Gospel** **1:1-24**

*God's message for you is that you have followed cursed men away from the gospel of grace which gave you the only relationship available with God. The gospel you are leaving is the one true gospel there is. I received the gospel I gave you by revelation when I was struck blind from my horse by the Lord. As I told you back then, It was confirmed by three years of private instruction with the Lord, and it was affirmed by the Jerusalem apostles.*

**II. Church Apostles Refute Those Judaizers Who Add to the Gospel** **2:1-10**

**A.** Judaizers affecting the church in Antioch are refuted in Jerusalem.

False brethren are adding to the gospel, so Paul, Barnabbas and Titus go to Jerusalem to share with the apostles the gospel they preach. The Apostles affirmed the gospel Paul preached and refuted the false brethren's attempt to add rules to the gospel.

**B.** Background: This Gospel-corrective measure of Galatians 2:1-10 happened either after **Acts 11:27-30** (when Paul and Barnabbas brought money for famine relief to "the elders," see 12:24-25) or it happened during **Acts 15:1-15** (Jerusalem Council).

**C.** If it was at the Jerusalem Council, why does Paul not mention between the end of Gal. 1 and beginning of Gal. 2 he had been there earlier (Acts 11-12, before the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey)? But if it was famine relief, why does the description of all that happened during the visit he recounts in Gal. 2:1-10 correspond so closely with the content of the Jerusalem Council? Plus, why do the elders ask them to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10) if they had just brought money for the poor in Jerusalem?

**D.** Jerusalem Council makes most sense - after establishing Galatian churches in Acts 14.

1. In either case, it is about 14-15 years after Paul's conversion - about 48-49 AD.

2. It was revealed (Gal. 2:2) Paul was to go to Jerusalem with Titus & Barnabbas.

But in Acts 15:3, "the church sent Paul and Barnabbas." Might be two different occasions, but more likely, two concurrent realities are described, one by Paul and one by Luke. There was a revelation (Paul) and then the church sent them (Luke).

3. Similarly, it is worth noting that Galatians 2:2 says that Paul submitted his gospel in private and Acts 15 portrays a public encounter. Again, maybe two different situations, but more likely, it is two parts of the same event. For example, Paul and his companions first meet in private with the apostles (Paul in Gal. 2:2). Then when the apostles see what a big issue this is, they bring additional leaders and at least one of the Pharisees who had believed on Christ but had added to the gospel (15:1-5), to debate the matter and to render a decision (Luke in Acts 15:6-11, ff.).

4. In Galatians 2:4-5, we see that "Judaizers" pressured the church in Antioch to keep the law (see example in Acts 15:5) and Paul strongly disagreed with their message. The Antioch church needed the apostles to resolve the debate over the gospel.

5. The apostles and elders verified the gospel Paul preached. Gal. 2:6-9 / Acts 15:7-11

6. Acts 15:5 – A Pharisee had become a believer but was still holding onto tradition, and he attempted to persuade Jerusalem leaders to require conformity with the law. Good chance he’s one of those who had been attempting to influence Antioch.
7. Peter, in Acts 15:8-11, makes it plain that for both Gentile and Jew, God cleanses their hearts by faith in Christ by the grace of God (e.g., see Ephesians 2:8-9).
8. Worth mentioning Acts 15:19-29 even though it is not mentioned in Galatians 2. Since Galatians is about how nothing is to be added to the gospel, Paul did not find it necessary to add to Galatians the four things the apostles advised the church to remember: *to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication*. The reason for these four things, Wiersbe points out, is that two are a common part of pagan worship and Gentile life, yet are always prohibitions for God’s people (immorality and idolatry). The other two are concessions the apostles are asking the Gentiles to make to keep from stumbling a Jewish Christian brother (food that was strangled and food with blood).
9. The apostles asked them to remember poor believers in Jerusalem. Gal. 2:10

### III. Our Takeaways

- A. The gospel of grace preached by Paul and being departed from by the Galatians was confirmed by the apostolic leaders of Jerusalem 20 years after Jesus died. That gospel was communicated in Acts and in Galatians – *Faith in Christ brings righteousness*.
  1. Acts 15:7-11
    - a. Hear the **word of the gospel and believe**
    - b. Cleansed **their hearts by faith**
    - c. Saved through the **grace of the Lord Jesus**
  2. Galatians 2:1-10
    - a. The gospel which I preach among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2)
    - b. In Pisidian Antioch (Galatia), he says, *Through Him, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and **whoever believes is freed from all things*** (Acts 13:38-39)
    - c. In PA, he says, *As many as has been **appointed to eternal life believed*** (13:48)
- B. People who want God’s standards to be lived out in others and in themselves sometimes fall into a works-based righteousness. When tempted to prove ourselves, we often resort to looking at our deeds. God wants us to repeatedly be reminded that the **only justification for our sins is faith in Christ**. (Rest of Galatians elaborates on this.)
- C. Faith in Christ does not mean there are no standards of behavior that should go with it. But standards are **not the proof of our faith** nor **the means to being accepted** by God.

### IV. Discussion

- A. What is the gospel? [Compare your answers now to answers at the end of this study.]
- B. Without disparaging any particular churches, when have you been in a church setting where this issue of “what really is the gospel” came up? What happened?
- C. Why were Judaizers then and why are people today tempted towards legalism? (*Might there be both good and bad reasons?*)

- D. In your own Christian life, how do you manage your confidence in the sufficiency of faith in Christ and still honor a call to righteous living?

**V. Homework (10 minutes a day)**

- A. Read Galatians this week, one chapter a day.
- B. Write down one verse from each chapter (different from the ones you chose last week) and text it to yourself or write it down somewhere. Maybe share it.
- C. Ask this question at a shared meal this week: *If someone who carried guilt around about something from the past knew they were totally and completely forgiven by faith in Christ alone, and not by something they had to do in order to prove it, what should it do for them about the guilt and why?*