

## **The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians**

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### **Chapter Four -**

#### **That Gospel which I preach Among the Gentiles**

Galatians 2:1-14

Verse 1: **"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also."**

This brings us to the visit of Paul, Barnabas, and Titus to the city of Jerusalem . . . the visit so clearly described for us in chapter fifteen of the Acts of the Apostles. The issue of circumcision had been brought up by the legalizers (Judaizers and false teachers who probably claimed to represent the mother church in Jerusalem).

They had declared that the disciples at Antioch and Syria were not really saved at all because they had not yet submitted to the Law of Moses and the rituals of Judaism. I trust you will read the entire fifteenth chapter of Acts. Read it carefully, thoroughly, and become familiar with the important matters discussed at the council in Jerusalem.

Verse 2: **"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."**

Please notice the first part of verse 2: **"And I went up by revelation."** Paul simply means that he went up according to the revealed will of GOD. That was the program of the Apostle Paul - and it is the program of every normal Christian. Whether we eat, or drink - or what so ever we do, we should do it all to the glory of GOD. We should never do anything according to our will or our program. We should always seek the will of GOD and the guiding hand of the HOLY GHOST.

Paul declares that he communicated unto them:

#### **"THAT GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES"**

In other words, when he arrived at the great council meeting he did not minimize the fact that he had been preaching the new message of "salvation by grace through faith plus nothing." He cut no corners, he feared no consequences; he laid the truth down, line upon line, and told the ecclesiastical leaders exactly what he had been preaching to the Gentiles.

Paul knew the situation was serious, and would be very difficult to solve . . . that only through

the HOLY GHOST could it BE solved. There was great danger that the progress of the Gospel could be hindered by this terrible conflict between salvation by grace through faith, and Judaism. Paul sought the cooperation of the apostles, rather than their opposition. He wanted their good graces, not their scorn - but he did not compromise the message of grace to obtain their good graces.

He stood firm on the one foundation: JESUS CHRIST - crucified, buried, and risen "**according to the Scriptures,**" and "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**" - the only hope for any poor sinner, regardless of race, creed, or color, is the grace of GOD - CHRIST in your heart by faith.

Verses 3-5: "**But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.**"

What Paul is saying here is simply this: "Not even Titus, **who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**" At another time, under different circumstances and under other conditions, Paul had taken Timothy and circumcised him. He did it on the principle of being "**all things to all men, that I might by all means save some**" (Acts 16:3; I Corinthians 9:22). Read both of these verses carefully.

But when the apostles in Jerusalem insisted that Titus must be circumcised as a condition of spiritual fellowship, Paul refused to surrender to their demands. He stood his ground, in order that the truth of the Gospel of "salvation by grace" through faith minus works might continue to be preached and practiced. Certainly we should thank GOD for Paul's actions in such a serious time as that was.

Paul was not a religious hot-head or fanatic. At another time, as I have already stated, he permitted Timothy to be circumcised. He loved his people so much (Romans 9:1-3) that he was willing to do anything and everything possible to reach his own nation with the Gospel of grace; but when he realized the danger presented by such practices (the danger of frustrating the grace of GOD, or adding to the Gospel of grace) he flatly refused to permit Titus to be circumcised.

He declared that false brethren had been brought in without his knowing it ("**brought in... privily to spy out our liberty**" of grace). He said, "**We gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.**" He did not compromise with them one iota. He stood firm and refused to permit the circumcision of Titus, even though he (Titus) was a Greek.

Verses 6-10: "**But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the**

**right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."**

Beloved, it always pays to stand up for Jesus. It never pays to compromise.

Paul's authority was recognized and acknowledged by the apostles at the council in Jerusalem. Be sure to read Acts chapter 15 . . . study it carefully, and you will note that Paul stood up for the Gospel of the grace of GOD. He declared that the Christian is not under the Law of Moses, that the Law of Moses does not help save the Christian, and that the Law of Moses does not help keep one saved. He stood up for the truth that the gospel of the Law neither saves us, nor helps to save us; neither keeps us nor helps to keep us.

Paul declared to the council there that the Law of Moses was neither his means of life, nor was it his rule of life; but it was emphasized in the council at Jerusalem that the believer should be careful in the exercise of the liberty provided in the grace of GOD. The Christian should be very careful to avoid (if at all possible) anything that would cause a weak brother to stumble. Please read Romans 14:1 through Romans 15:3. Also read I Corinthians 8, verses 1 through 13.

After much debating at the council in Jerusalem, the conclusion was reached that GOD had called Peter to minister to the nation of Israel, but that GOD had called and commissioned Paul to minister to the Gentiles (Romans 1:11-13). They decided that Paul should go to the heathen (the Gentiles) and that they (the apostles) would go unto the circumcision. Peter and the other apostles extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul, thereby acknowledging the authority of the Gospel of grace . . . that there was no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, but that in this dispensation of the grace of GOD, all must be saved alike: By grace, through faith in the finished work of JESUS, without the deeds of the Law, without the practices of Judaism.

Verse 11: **"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."**

Peter had made a remarkable address at the council meeting in Jerusalem. He sanctioned Paul's position concerning grace . . . that the Christian believer is not under the Law of Moses. Read Acts 15:7-11. But when Peter came to visit Paul in Antioch, he changed his tune! He took a different attitude, for which Peter truly **"WAS TO BE BLAMED."**

After the meeting at Jerusalem, it had seemed that the matter was settled. Peter, quite happy over his newfound liberty in the grace of GOD, decided he would pay a visit to the believers at Antioch, and there would demonstrate his agreement with the Apostle Paul concerning the liberty of the grace of GOD. But when he went to Antioch, something happened which caused Paul to openly rebuke Peter. Paul exclaimed in the presence of Peter, concerning his own personal relationship to the Law of Moses, **"FOR I THROUGH THE LAW AM DEAD TO THE LAW!"** (Galatians 2:19). What a statement! What a tremendous testimony! Paul did not say, "The LAW is dead" . . . indeed, he did not. He said, **"I.. am dead TO the Law!"**

Of course, Paul is speaking of GOD's holy Law, including the commandments written upon the tables of stone. So far as that Law is concerned, Paul said, "I am dead." That is, "In the eyes of

the Law, I, Paul do not exist any longer. The Law does not even recognize my existence." Paul did not say, "The Law is dead," no, no. It is definitely true that the Law is very much alive. The Law still curses, it still condemns, it still is the ministration of death. The Law demands the death penalty for sin; but Paul declared, "So far as I am concerned, the Law cannot touch me any more. I am beyond the reach of the Law of Moses forever! I through the Law am dead to the Law. What I could never have done in my flesh, JESUS did for me" (Romans 8:1-4).

In Romans 7:4 Paul declares, **"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ."** You see, what Paul enjoyed, we also enjoy in CHRIST . . . that is, if we are a true believer.

Again - in Romans 6:14: **"for ye are not under the Law, but under grace."** Every born again believer is under grace . . . not under Law.

In Galatians 2:20, Paul puts it this way: **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."** Yes, Paul said, **"I... am dead to the Law - but I am alive unto God."** He spoke these words in response to certain inconsistent men - especially the Apostle Peter at Antioch. Paul had been preaching "Grace, Grace, Grace . . . salvation by Grace, entirely apart from the Law . . . salvation by faith in the finished work of the Lord JESUS, plus nothing." He had taught that the Gentile believers were not under the Law of Moses, but that they were saved by grace apart from the Law of Moses, sanctified by grace and kept by grace, apart from the Law of Moses. Peter also, when he came up to visit the believers at Antioch, endorsed the message of Paul and entered into full Christian fellowship with the Gentile believers, on the basis that they were saved by grace alone.

Then shortly, a group of legalistic, proselyting Law-preachers came up from the mother church in Jerusalem, in order to spy on Paul and his liberty in the grace of GOD. Peter, being afraid because of these legalistic preachers, immediately became so frightened that he withdrew himself from the Gentile believers and put himself back under the Law of Moses. Paul became so righteously indignant that he openly rebuked Peter, and as we would say today, Paul "laid him out." Peter reminds me of some of the fellows today. His error was two-fold:

When he was with Jews, he followed the conduct of the Jew; when he was with Gentiles, he took the place of a Gentile under grace. He was under Law one day and under grace the next. Certainly he was living a very inconsistent life, and Paul knew it. Paul severely rebuked him . . . and he did it publicly. Suppose we let Paul tell us about it:

Verses 12-14: **"For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"**

Certainly this action on the part of Peter is hard to understand, and hard to explain; but we must

remember that after all, Peter was a man of like passions as we are. Even though the Roman Catholics claim Peter as their first Pope (they say he was the vicar of CHRIST and the head of the church . . . they claim their popes to be infallible), Peter certainly was not infallible on this occasion!

We need to notice verse 13 carefully: Other Jews likewise walked away - even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. So the Apostle Paul was left alone. He often stood alone, declaring the liberty "**wherewith Christ hath made us free**" (Galatians 5:1). So it was here, as in instances before. He stood, and he refused to compromise.

Thank GOD for the Apostle Paul . . . a man who feared no one except the Lord GOD who called and ordained him! Even though they all walked away, including his bosom friend and companion Barnabas, Paul stood firm.

In verse 14, we learn that Paul did not use the soft pedal in rebuking Peter. He said to Peter (before all of the Jews): "**If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?**" I think the words of Paul are easily understood, and I think we need not call up Dr. Sounding Brass or Theologian Tinkling Cymbal, to ask them to interpret these words for us. Paul said to Peter, "Why do you live one way, and command others to live another way?"

The same is true today. Ministers bind burdens upon their parishioners that the ministers themselves cannot bear . . . rules and regulations are laid down that preachers could not keep if they tried - yet they command their parishioners to practice their rules and regulations. Paul rebuked Peter to his face, before all of the people.

To sum up the matter, we can clearly see and understand that the Galatians knew that Paul was certainly not seeking popularity. He was not seeking glory for himself. Paul puts his own character and ability in the background, and boldly declares that his Gospel of Grace was revealed directly from GOD . . . it did not come through man. As for the Judaizers, this man Paul had been an outstanding Judaist. He was a Jew, but he had forsaken Judaism for Christianity - which was, to him, something much better. Paul preached the grace of GOD for many years before he saw anyone of the other apostles. When he DID meet the others, they had nothing to add to his Gospel of Grace, because the Gospel of the marvelous grace of GOD is the last word from Heaven, revealed to the Apostle Paul . . . the ordained minister to the Gentiles.

Finally, after the council in Jerusalem, the other disciples recognized Paul's divine apostleship.

According to Galatians 2:11-14, Peter had nothing to say when he was severely rebuked by Paul. Certainly he had made a sad mistake in his actions at Antioch, but he did not speak up in defense of his authority for such action.

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