

Book of Galatians – Teaching #1

You will recall that it was through the **Apostle Peter** that the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was first preached to the Gentiles.

You can read about it in **Acts 10** where Peter was told to go to the house of Cornelius and preach the gospel. Cornelius was a gentile. This is the first time that the ministry of Jesus Christ was preached to the Gentiles.

You will recall the vision that Peter had of the sheet being brought down from heaven in his dream with a bunch of unclean animals on it. Peter was commanded to eat of these unclean animals. “Not so Lord, no unclean thing has ever passed over my lips” Peter said, The Lord instructed Peter that what the Lord calls clean, Peter should not consider them unclean.

All this is relationship to the gentiles, which to the Jew was an “unclean animal”

Peter was being sent to preach the gospel to these “unclean Gentiles”

You recall the story. At the same time God sent a message to Cornelius that Peter was coming and to receive him properly.

Thus, the conversion of the first group of Gentiles “for as Peter was witnessing to them, the Holy Spirit descended upon them as He had done to the Jews in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and Cornelius and his household were all saved.”

In any case, after **Paul’s** conversion in **Acts 9** (on the road to Damacus,) he was sent for several years (I believe it was 3 years) into Arabia where Paul was taught directly by the Lord Jesus of the ministry ahead for him. Notice at Paul’s conversion (Saul was his name now before God changed it to Paul) was sent to a man named Ananias who will pray that you receive your sight. Paul was blinded on the road for 3 days where he neither ate nor drank until he went the home of Ananias.

Note now verse **16 of Acts 9** where Jesus is instructing Ananias of the fact that Paul was coming to his house (you will recall that Saul was persecuting and killing all Christians and Ananias knew of the things he had been doing) where the Lord Jesus tells Ananias: “**for I will show him** (Saul) how many things he will suffer for my name’s sake.”

Beloved, this is important for us to understand. Paul was taught directly by the Lord Jesus.

b.p. here – It is possible that this is where Paul received the eye site problem that was later explained in **Chapter 4** book of Galatians.

Now the conversion of Saul caused quite a stir among the folks. They had heard how Saul had the names of folks (men and women) who were part of “the way” and he was bringing them to the chief priests where they were killed for their new found beliefs. So,

when Saul was converted there was much concern among the believers and those in authority set about to kill Saul, so they had to prepare a covert operation to get him out of town.

From Jerusalem Paul was taken to Tarsus and peace came to the church at his leaving.

All of this is background that needs to be set before we view **Galatians Chapter 1**.

After Paul was converted and spent some 10 years alone and away from the other believers, where Jesus Himself was teaching Paul, he returns to Jerusalem where he meets up with Barnabus and Mark and they set off to the area of Galatia.

The book of Galatians was written to the “churches of Galatia” not to a specific church per se.

In **Acts 15** we read about a division among the “new Gentile believers” and the Jewish believers where were insisting that the Gentile believers needed to follow the Jewish traditions (eating, going and wearing) as well as becoming circumcised in order to be “truly saved”

This was a heated debate, which Paul wanted sorted out.

The debate was causing much confusion among the new believers

Now Paul had been taught during his time in Syria by the Lord Himself that believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ – His death, burial and resurrection – was all that was needed to be “saved” and when hearing what these men were teaching, he and Barnabus decided they would go to Jerusalem and confront this matter.

So, once they arrived in Jerusalem, they met with the counsel to discuss this matter and point out their error.

Reading from **Acts 15:7** we note: “and when there had been much dispute, **Peter** rose up and began to testify of his experience at the home of Cornelius.

The conclusion of this matter is in **verse 10** where Peter summarizes with; “now therefore why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bare”

Then Peter sums up in **verse 11** with: “we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; we shall be saved in the same manner as they”

Notice something very interesting here beloved. **Peter did not say that “they should be saved in the same manner as we” but said “we should be saved in the same manner as they.**

In other words, the program of God is through belief, and not according to the rituals that the Jews were subject to, under Moses.

Why is this important? Because today beloved, much is added to the simplicity of belief in the church today by sincere but misguided folks that are “adding to the issue of belief” in order to be fully saved.

Such things as; behavior, food, entertainment, dress, etc. are things that some believers are adding to a belief system if a person is fully saved or going to heaven.

My last writing on **Lesson #29** of the Book of Romans deals with the issue of the novice or new believer and the more mature believer. Pull it up to refresh your memory if needed, so I will not discuss it further here.

Needless to say, that there was strong descension in the church over this kind of issue which the Apostle Paul wants to clear up, and that is the reason to help us understand the first portion of the Book of Galatians.

So let us begin the book with the book of Galatians.

Starting in **verse 1** Paul is presenting his pedigree to these believers. Paul was not building upon another mans ministry. Why is that important? Because the revelation given Paul was not known by the other disciples. He was taught directly from the Lord Jesus Himself.

In the Old Testament we have a similar situation with Moses when he was taken up on the mountain and given the plans for the tabernacle. God told Moses “Take heed that you build it according to the plan I have given you” Do not deviate from it, make it as I have said. Re-iterate the commandments I have given you to my people Israel just as I have given them to you. “Do not add to or take away from what I have told you.” God told Moses.

So too, if we fail to study the teachings of the Apostle Paul, we will go astray. We will substitute or add to, what God told Paul to teach.

You will recall that when Peter was speaking about the ministry of Paul, he said that some of the things Paul is teaching are “hard to understand” **2nd Peter 3:15&16** Why? Because Peter did not receive the same revelation. Paul was to go to the Gentiles with this message. It was not for them to add to what they already knew, but a “brand new revelation” that had nothing to do with the rituals that the Jewish people received from Moses.

That is why in **Acts 15** Paul went to Jerusalem to bring clarity to what these Judaizers were teaching.

Paul deals with these folks in Galatians chapter 1

Adding anything to “believing in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ” Paul called “another gospel” and not the one he was teaching.

It will only take you a second to realize what other things folks of today are teaching to be fully saved, (I have mentioned some of this above) but in **Acts 15**, the Jewish

Christians were adding the ritual of circumcise and foods etc. to their daily lives in order to be fully saved.

When I speak about being “fully saved” I am speaking about “going to heaven”

So, Paul tells the Galatians that what He received did not come from another man, but the Lord Jesus Himself. So **verse 1 of chapter 1**;

I believe that to fully understand the book of Galatians we need to fold in **Acts 15**

Now the Judaizers who Paul is addressing in Acts **15**, were trying to mix the issue of “being saved” with the keeping of the law. Their end game was to entice the Gentiles into the Jewish system for a more “perfect salvation.” They taught that a person was saved by faith AND by keeping the law given by Moses.

Beloved, this is a major issue among the churches today and it must be rejected. Believing in the “gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ” which is explained in scripture as the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is all that is necessary for your transportation into heaven when you die. Refer to the thief on the cross next to Jesus at the crucifixion.

Now folded within this portion of scripture in **Acts 15** are **two** important issues that are at the root of this dispute. They are:

– What do the Gentiles have to do to be saved – (that is the issue at hand here) and

2ndly what is going to become of Israel? We have thousands of Jews throughout history and we have divinely ordered rituals in a divinely ordered place, thousands of years of history. Is it all for nothing now? Is all of this history gone? Is Israel over?

What is disturbing is that there is a majority of churches throughout the world that see no future for Israel. They have no grasp that God is not finished with Israel.

You have the same issue today. Your answer to that dilemma is listed in three chapters of the **Book of Romans 9,10 and 11**. (all of which is covered in my Romans series and I will not reiterate it here) They have a destiny yet in the future, and is the primary Menckanism (sp) where God is going to deal with the destiny and redemption of man.

OK, then when we read **Acts 15 verse 12**, we read; “then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonder God had worked through them among the Gentiles, and after they had become silent, James answered saying:” *men and brethren listen to me. Simon has declared how God at first visited the Gentiles (as noted above and Cornelius house) to take out of them a people for His name, and with the works of the prophets agree, just as it is written “after this I will return and will rebuild **the tabernacle of David** which has fallen down, I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord even all the Gentiles who are called by My name says the Lord who does all these things.:* James is quoting from **Amos chapter 9. 11&12** In the future, we will see the fulfillment of the

Davidic Covenant that we read about in **Revelation 20**. The angel Gabriel told Mary in **Luke 1;32** that her son would sit on the *throne of his father David*. That is Jesus, would sit on this throne. The millennium is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

Most churches know very little about this covenant and do not preach it.

The plan of God for today is listed here. God is not saving the whole world (as some would tell you) God has not yet ushered in His Kingdom (that is the 1,000-year reign of Christ yet to come)

Well then, what is God doing today? He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name.

We learn in the **Book of Revelations** that standing before the throne of God there will be a people from every tongue, tribe and people of every nation.

Now if we might, return to **Acts 15: 20** to see what James (the ½ brother of Jesus) says is required of the Gentiles today' "that we write to them *to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled and from blood.*" That's it.

No mention of keeping the sabbath, no mention of the need to be circumcised, no mention of keeping the 613 rules to live by in the Old Testament. (law) That's it....

Ok, skipping ahead concerning the Apostle Paul, he wrote over half of the New Testament, without his writings we would know nothing of the **truth that is the body of Christ, the function** of the church today, the **destiny** of the church and the **activity** of the Church, and the book of Galatians lists the freedom for the believer today, few books have had more of a profound influence on the history of mankind. Christianity might have been just one more Jewish sect. Some call this epistle the most important written by Paul. Romans was the most foundational book in the New Testament but many state that this book of Galatians has the most impact on the church today.

Continuing In the book of Galatians - Paul states that those who would add" to the gospel, other things to get saved, Paul called those teaching of other things as "another gospel" other than the one he taught which is the "grace of God." We are *not saved* by the promises we make to Him; we are saved by the promises He made to us.

These folks taught that these new believers should follow the Mosaic law to be fully saved.

Paul is about to open up the "box of beliefs that we know as **legalism**"

Grace is God's answer to pride. Good works do not make a "good man" A good man does good works, because he is a good man and is afforded liberty in which to move. Again beloved, keep the horse before the cart.

As one brother said; "there is something about error when it once grips the mind, that makes it assume the importance that the truth never had."

Legalism *always seems to take the heart out of Christianity, and replaces it with a heart of stone.*

As I continue with the Book of Galatians, we will have more next time –

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