

Don't "Add To" or "Take Away"

Have you ever wondered what drove the Apostle Paul to write the Book of Galatians?

You recall that he was sent especially to preach to the Gentiles. Being a Jew, that was a challenge for him, I am sure. In fact, if you read closely, you will note that his heart was to preach to his brethren (the Jew) and he was constantly under the assumption that he needed to take the gospel to them.

God had another idea. He was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles – period.

A little background is needed here beloved, look with me at **Acts chapter 15**.

Let me set the stage for us. There were Jewish converts who came to Christianity, but they had a somewhat different plan than God gave to the Apostle Paul.

These Jewish Christians had the idea that in order for someone to be completely "saved" they needed to keep the law of Moses, become circumcised and then add to that experience the "New Birth" in Jesus Christ. To be completely "saved" they needed to first convert to Judaism and their laws, and then add to what they had received, belief in Jesus Christ to become a Christian.

Reading closely in **Acts 15**, you will note that there was no "small descension" when Paul heard what they were teaching.

Remember that the Apostle Paul did not receive the message given him through another man. He specifically states that he neither received the message given him for the Gentiles from any man, nor was he taught it, but that he had received this message directly from Jesus Christ Himself. **Galatians 1:12**.

After his conversion, he neither talked to any other man, nor did he go up to Jerusalem to talk with those who were already Apostles. Rather he left for 3 years and then another 14 years before returning to Jerusalem.

He was preaching Christ to those who would listen and the problem did not arise until "false brethren" heard of the "liberty" that he was preaching and they just could not handle that.

Now back to **Acts 15**, You will notice that It was Peter that broke the ice in his declaration that he personally had been called by God to go to the house of Cornelius (a gentile) and preach the gospel to him and his household. They heard and they believed and the sign that followed their belief was that "God gave them the Holy Spirit" in the same manner that he himself had received.

How was that manifested do you suppose? Correct, they were speaking in an unknown tongue just as had happened on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**.

Peter goes on to say in Acts 15: 9 that God had made no distinction between "us and them", purifying their hearts by faith.

Peter then goes on to say something very important for us today. He said in verse 10 – “why do you test God by putting a yolk on their neck that neither our fathers nor ourselves were able to bare.”

Please hear that all of you teachers that are putting a heavy burden on the Saints.

Look at **verse 11** – a very important point needs to be made here. Peter says “we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ “we shall be saved in the same manner as they” He did not say- they shall be saved in the same manner as we have been saved, but that we (Jews) believers in the law of Moses and circumcision should be saved in the same manner as **they have been saved**. Ie. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, period.

So many folks in the Church today are not satisfied with just believing, there must be more that we can and should be doing to be “fully saved”

Much more needs saying as the half-brother of Jesus – James- gets up and speaks at this important meeting

James says – I therefore judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are returning to God. We should however remind them these four things – (1) -abstain - *from those things polluted by idols*, (2) *abstain from sexual immorality and from (3) things strangled and from (4) blood*.

He then says in **verse 19** to lay upon these new believers *no greater burden than these four things*.

This is in essence what Paul was telling the believers in Galatia.

Add nothing to it, and take nothing away.

“There remains a rest to the people of God, and they that enter that rest hath ceased from their own labors.”

As Paul said in **Galatians 1:4** – I marvel that you are turning away so soon, from Him who called you (Jesus Christ) to a different gospel message. One that might tickle your fancy, but have to basis in realty.

What many believers lack in direction, they choose to make up in activity. Not only wasted effort beloved, but will be burned up as wood, hay, and stubble at the resurrection. His promise is to fulfill that which we have committed unto Him until that day. **2nd Timothy 1:12**

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