



## **THE MAN WHO REFUSED TO BE OVERWHELMED AND TEMPTED BY PRESTIGE AND BEING RECOGNIZED BY ESTEEMED RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

**GALATIANS 2:1-10**, “Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. <sup>2</sup> I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. <sup>3</sup> Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. <sup>5</sup> We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. <sup>6</sup> As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. <sup>7</sup> On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. <sup>8</sup> For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. <sup>9</sup> James, Cephas<sup>[c]</sup> and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. <sup>10</sup> All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.”

**In the preceding passage (last week) Paul proved the independence of his gospel; here he is concerned to prove that this independence is not anarchy against the church and that his gospel is not something that divides and causes disharmony, but no other than honest and true faith delivered to the Church.**

**After fourteen years' work he went up to Jerusalem, taking with him Titus, a young friend, who was a Greek (Gentile believer). That visit was not easy.**

**You can feel the agitation in Paul's writing. Paul's problem was that:**

1. He could not say too little or he might seem to be abandoning his principles; and
2. He could not say too much, or it might seem that he was at open variance with the leaders of the Church.

**The result was that Paul reflected his anxiety in his writing (his feelings were passed irritation), it was **frustration** and anger.**

***From the beginning the real leaders of the Church accepted his position; but there were others who were out to tame this fiery spirit of Paul's.***

**There were those, who, as we have seen,**

- Accepted Christianity but believed that God never gave any privilege to a man who was not a Jew; and that,
- Therefore, before a man could become a Christian, he must be **circumcised** and take the whole law upon him.

**These Judaizers seized on Titus as a test case.**

***There is a battle behind this passage; and it seems likely that the leaders of the Church urged Paul, for the sake of peace, to give in, in the case of Titus.***

***But Paul stood like a rock.*** He knew that to yield would be to accept the **bondage** of the law and to turn his back on the freedom which is in Christ.

**In the end, Paul's determination won the day.**

***In principle it was accepted that his work lay in the non-Jewish world, and the work of Peter and James among the Jews.***

*It is to be carefully noted that it is not a question of two different gospels being preached; it is a question of the same gospel being brought to two different spheres by different people specially qualified to do so.*

***Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."***

## Characteristics of Paul seen in these scriptures:

### 1. ***He was a man who gave authority its due respect.***

He went and talked with the leaders of the Church however much he might differ from them. We should remember...however right we happen to be, there is nothing to be gained by rudeness. There is never any reason why courtesy and determination should not go hand in hand.

### 2. ***He was a man who refused to be taken in by esteem and prestige.***

Repeatedly he mentions the reputation which the leaders and pillars of the Church enjoyed. He respected them and treated them with courtesy; but he remained inflexible. Paul was always certain that he was seeking the approval not of men but of God.

### 3. ***He was a man conscious of a special task.*** The man who knows he has a God-given task will always find that he has a God-given strength to carry it out.

## UNITY IS ESSENTIAL

*Galatians 2:11-13, "But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. Before some men arrived from James it was his habit to eat with the Gentiles. When they came he withdrew and separated himself because he was scared of the circumcision party. The rest of the Jews played the hypocrite along with him, so that even Barnabas was led away along with them by their hypocritical actions."*

**The trouble was by no means at an end.** A strict Jew was forbidden even to do business with a Gentile; he must not go on a journey with a Gentile; he must neither give hospitality to, nor accept hospitality from, a Gentile.

Here in Antioch arose the tremendous problem, in face of all this could the Jews and the Gentiles sit down together at a common meal (Agape meal)? Peter came to Antioch and, at first, shared the common meal with Jew and Gentile. Then came certain of the Jewish party from Jerusalem (used James' name). They worked on Peter so much that he withdrew from the common meal. The other Jews withdrew with him and finally even Barnabas was involved in this secession.

**It was then that Paul spoke with all the intensity of which his passionate nature was capable. Paul adamantly stated:**

- ***A church ceases to be Christian if it contains class distinctions.*** In the presence of God a man is neither Jew nor Gentile, noble nor base, rich nor poor; he is a sinner for whom Christ died. If men share in a common sonship they must be brothers.

- ***It is wrong to give in to authority when it is against what God has intended.*** No man should rule over what is right just to fit into a group's approval of class status. A famous name can never justify an infamous action.

***Paul's action gives us a vivid example of how one strong man by his steadfastness can check a drift away from the right course before it becomes a tidal wave.***

## **THE END OF THE LAW**

*Galatians 2:14-17, "But when I saw that they were straying away from the right path which the gospel lays down, I said to Peter in front of them all, "If you who are a born Jew choose to live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why are you forcing the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are by nature Jews; we are not Gentile sinners as you would call them; and we know that a man is not put right with God because he does the works which the law lays down, but through faith in Jesus Christ. Now we have accepted this faith in Jesus Christ, so that we might be right with God, and that faith has nothing to do with the works the law lays down, because no man can ever put himself right with God by doing the works the law lays down. Now if in our search to be made right with God through Christ Jesus we too become what you call sinners, are you then going to argue that Christ is the minister of sin? God forbid!"*

***The Jerusalem decision was a compromise, and, like all compromises, it had in it the seeds of trouble.***

***In effect the decision was that the Messianic Jews would go on living like Jews, observing circumcision and the law, but that the Gentiles were free from these observances.***

**Clearly, things could not go on like that, because the inevitable result was to produce two grades of Christians and two quite distinct classes in the Church.**

***Paul's answer was twofold:***

1. *First, he said, "We agreed long ago that no amount of observance of the law can make a man right with God. That is a matter of grace. A man cannot earn, but must accept the generous offer of the love of God in Jesus. Therefore the whole business of law is irrelevant."*
2. *Next he said, "You hold that to forget all this business about rules and regulations will make you a sinner (those not observing the Law). But that is precisely what Jesus Christ told you not to do. He did not tell you to try*

to earn salvation by eating this animal and not eating that one. **He told you to fling yourself without reserve on the grace of God.**

**This is the point that had to come. It could not be right for Gentiles to come to God by grace and Jews to come to him by law. For Paul there was only one reality, grace, and it was by way of **surrender** to that grace that all men must come.**

## **THE LIFE THAT IS CRUCIFIED AND RISEN**

*Galatians 2:18-21, "If I build up again these very things that I destroyed, I simply succeed in making myself a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. True, I am alive; but it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. The life that I am now living, although it is still in the flesh, is a life which is lived in faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to cancel out the grace of God; for if I can get right with God by means of the law, then Christ died quite unnecessarily."*

**Paul speaks out of the depths of personal experience. So great was the change in his life...that the only way he could describe it was to say that he had been crucified with Christ so that the man he used to be was dead and the living power within him now was Christ himself.**

*"If I can put myself to rights with God by meticulously obeying the law then what is the need of grace? If I can win my own salvation then why had Christ to die?" Paul was quite sure of one thing--that Jesus Christ had done for him what he could never have done for himself.*

**If a man can be saved by his own works and doings, then Christ's death was an **unnecessary** piece of torture; and, instead of being the most glorious manifestation of divine love, it was a shameful waste, putting upon Christ a terrible burden of suffering which was totally unnecessary.**

**We who know Christ intimately know that it is by grace are we saved, not of works...**

