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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**"APOSTOLIC LIBERTY"**

**(I’M TO FREE TO BE BOUND)**

**Galatians 2:1-10**

***Galatians 2:1 "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with [me] also."***

Fourteen years after his new birth in Christ, Paul made another visit to Jerusalem. This time, he went with two of his ministry partners, Barnabas and Titus. Paul’s second trip to Jerusalem came after his first visit when he had met Peter (1:18). Two important figures accompanied him on this occasion, Barnabas and Titus. In the first chapter, Paul was showing that his training was not of man, but God. The argument was that Paul’s gospel is divine in its origin. In this chapter, however, we will see that Paul has ministered with the approval of the apostles who were part of the twelve. The argument is that his gospel is divine in nature. We know that Paul had been involved in ministry for many years at this point. We will find in Paul's journeys that several ministers travelled with him. He really had a large following everywhere he went. The reason he mentions the 14 years here, is possibly to show the success of his ministry. He was so believed that men and women followed along with his group and helped him minister.

***Galatians 2:2 "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."***

The reason for this second trip was by [because of] revelation; that is, by prompting him to go, God foresaw the necessity for this consultation with the apostles. In Jerusalem, Paul communicated (laid before) his gospel to the apostles. The Greek word rendered “communicated” means “to refer something to another party for his opinion of it.” So, Paul privately sought the judgment of them which were of reputation (the Jerusalem apostles) regarding the gospel he had been proclaiming. Why did Paul seek the apostles’ opinion? He had no doubt as to the validity of his gospel, for he had received it directly from Christ; so, his consultation with John, James, and Peter was not to ascertain whether his gospel was correct. Rather it was to obtain their approval of the way he was bringing Gentiles into the church: they were admitted without circumcision on the basis of their faith in Christ. Apart from the apostles’ consent, Paul’s ministry among the heathen would be hindered, he would run [labor] in vain. Paul had preached what the Spirit had taught him, and now he was coming to see Peter, James, and the others in authority to tell them what he had preached. The message, that Paul gave here, was not for everyone, but for those in authority, for their approval. Paul had been ministering this message for over 11 years. He now wanted the others to approve his ministry. The fact that he "went up by revelation", means that God sent him. He had never questioned the message before, but since he was sent by the Spirit, he felt he now needed Peter and James' approval. He met privately with the church leaders and presented to them the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles, a gospel of justification before God and of growth in sanctification.

***Galatians 2:3 "But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:"***

The doctrine of circumcision and of sacrificing has sprung up in the church. The Judaizers have insisted that the Christians go back to keeping the Jewish law. These people had forced Titus to be circumcised before they would accept him, because he was a Greek. This is the very reason that God allowed the temple to be destroyed. In fact, about 20 or so years after this very happening is when the temple was destroyed. Either Jesus did it all on the cross for us, or we worship Him in vain. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for all time for everyone. To sacrifice after this would be to say that Jesus was not the perfect Lamb of God. Paul wants to get this question settled.

***Galatians 2:4 "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:"*** Notice, in this verse, that Paul says these people were pretending to be believers in Christ. False brothers who pretended to be true followers of Christ had infiltrated the church to spy on them. They were really troublemakers to try to break up the Christian movement. Many Jews were converted to Christianity, so it was hard to determine sometimes who was really converted, and who was there to try to put them back under the law. Unawares brought in means “smuggled in.” These false brethren tried to get Titus circumcised. These unbelievers came in privily (sneaked in) or infiltrated Christian churches. Their purpose was to spy out and carefully examine the believers’ apostolic liberty or freedom from the Mosaic Law. The ultimate aim of this spying was to bring the Christians into bondage by tying them up with all the rules and regulations of Judaism.

***Galatians 2:5 "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."***

Paul refused to submit to the Judaizers’ demands of imposing the law on Christians. To have done so would have corrupted the pure truth of the gospel. Since Paul had founded these churches with belief in Christ, he felt responsible to keep them in the faith. He would not even give these false brethren any time to bring their law to the people. He did not want his people confused by allowing them to hear false messages.

***Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."***

***Colossians 2:4 "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."***

***Galatians 2:6 "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:"***

Those who were recognized as important, including the other apostles, didn’t intimidate Paul. He knew that God does not show favoritism. These leaders added nothing to Paul. Though he had come to make clear to them the gospel he preached, he did not need their validation. God had revealed the message of the gospel directly to Paul through Christ. He needed no human endorsement or permission to preach it. These troublemakers, that had come into the church, had intended to put them back under the law. These brand new Christians were impressed with the authority with which they had spoken, even if they were not bringing the good news of the gospel. They were tender believers and must be carefully guarded from false teachings. Paul says, it really does not matter that they are supposed to be someone special. Probably they were Pharisees, who thought they were better than other men. God is no respecter of persons. All of their education meant nothing to God. Paul had been taught of God. God's teaching was much above the teaching of man.

***Galatians 2:7 "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as [the gospel] of the circumcision [was] unto Peter;"***

The apostles perceived that Paul had been divinely entrusted with the gospel to Gentiles, while Peter was entrusted with the gospel to Jews. They had been entrusted with the very same gospel but sent to two different peoples. We know that Paul had been sent to the Gentiles. It was the Jew who practiced circumcision.

***Acts 13:47 "For so hath the Lord commanded us, [saying], I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."***

The Jews had thought themselves to be the only family that God wanted. They thought themselves to be better than others. Paul had been specifically sent to the Gentiles. It was Peter, however, who had been present when the Holy Ghost descended on the uncircumcised Gentiles.

***Acts 10:45 "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."***

God had shown Peter that the Gentiles were acceptable to God, even though they had never been circumcised. We see a direct statement in the next Scripture about Paul being called to the Gentiles.

***Romans 15:16 "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."***

***Galatians 2:8 "(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)"***

The church leaders in Jerusalem recognized Paul’s apostolic authority. They recognized that just as Peter had been entrusted and empowered by God to preach the gospel to the circumcised, the same was true of Paul on behalf of the uncircumcised. Though each was ministering primarily to different audiences (Jews and Gentiles), their gospel was the same: circumcision was not required to be saved. Salvation is by grace apart from works. Paul is recognizing the ministry of Peter. He is just explaining that his call and Peter's call of God is to two different people. This does not mean that Paul never spoke to the Jewish converts, nor does it mean that Peter never spoke to the Gentiles. It does mean, that the main focus of their ministry was Paul to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews. Let us look at the commission Jesus gave to Paul in the following verses.

***Acts 26:17 "Delivering thee from the people, and [from] the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,"***

***Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."***

***Galatians 2:9 "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."***

Now, we see three of the real pillars of the church approving the ministry of Paul. The right hand signifies the spiritual blessing. Of course, Cephas, in the verse above, is the same as Peter. Peter, James {the half-brother of Jesus}, and John blessed Paul and Barnabus in their end eavor to reach the Gentile world for Christ. Peter actually was over all of the churches, whether they were made up of Jew or Gentile. His preaching, however, was focused on the Jew. James was head of the church at Jerusalem. John is the same as John the Revelator.

***Galatians 2:10 "Only [they would] that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."***

Even though their ministries were to a different people, they were all to remember the poor. Paul did not need instruction in this, he had been doing that very thing from the very beginning. It seems the believers in Jerusalem had been poverty stricken, and Paul had brought the message of charity to the Gentile churches. He explains to them in the following verses that they are to help their converted Jewish brothers.

***Romans 15:25 "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints."***

***Romans 15:26 "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."***

***Romans 15:27 "It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."***

The church in Jerusalem was made up of mainly Jews who had converted to Christianity. The one request the apostles made of Paul was that he would remember [help] the poor. Paul willingly complied, saying that he was forward [zealous] to do so. James, Cephas (Peter), and John those who had been part of Jesus’s original inner circle of apostles, the pillars of the Jerusalem church fully acknowledged Paul’s gospel ministry and extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas. Thus, they were all in full agreement on the gospel. James, Peter, and John only asked one thing of Paul not that he would modify his message, but that he would remember the poor. To this Paul gladly agreed, for it was something he himself made every effort to do. Not only should we observe the unity that the apostles had on the gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ apart from keeping the law, but we should also notice their unity in the outworking of the gospel in society. In the Old Testament, God regularly showed concern for the poor and oppressed. He commanded Israel to show compassion and care to the marginalized, including widows and orphans (Exodus 22:22; 23: 6; Leviticus 19:10; Deuteronomy 10:18; 15:7-8; Proverbs 22:22-23; 28:27; Isaiah 1:17), and he commands the church to do the same (James 1:27; 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17). His agenda should be our agenda. We should “remember the poor.”

**Questions**

1. How many years had passed before Paul took Barnabus and Titus with him to Jerusalem?

2. How does this chapter differ from chapter 1?
3. Why do you suppose that Paul mentioned the 14 years?
4. Paul went up by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
5. Who did Paul bring this message to?
6. Why did Paul feel that he needed Peter and James' approval at this time?

7. What had they compelled Titus to do?

8. What two things, that the Jews had brought, has sprung up in the church?

9. What does the statement "went up by revelation" show us?
10. To sacrifice after the resurrection of Jesus was saying what?
11. Why had the false brethren come in?
12. Why was it difficult to know those who had come to make trouble?

13. Why did Paul feel responsible for the Christians?
14. What does Colossians chapter 2 verse 8 warn them to beware of?

15. What was the difference in Peter's ministry and Paul's?

17. Where do we find the commission Jesus gave to Paul?
18. Who gave Paul and Barnabus the right hand of fellowship?
19. What does the right hand signify?
20. Who was this James?
21. Why were the Gentile believers to remember the poor Jews?