THE ISSUE SETTLED

**DATE: 7/1/2015 Wed.**

**TEXT: Galatians 2:1-10; Acts 15, 20**

**INTRODUCTION**

After having established in **chapter 1** that his salvation and apostleship was a direct revelation from Jesus Christ

Paul now points out that the issue of Grace and Works has already been settled

When you boil it all down, there are only two religions in the world today

The false operate under many names, but they still fall into one of two categories

Someone either believes Salvation is by Works, or Salvation is by Grace

Either Salvation is something we Earn or it is a Gift

There can be no mixture of the two

These systems are total opposites

Throughout Paul’s ministry he was constantly warning about false teaching

**Acts 20:17 - *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church”***

**Acts 20:28-32 …**

Not long after he had planted the churches in Galatia …

False teachers came in with a mixture of Grace and Works for salvation and sanctification

In this portion of Scripture, we see Paul continuing to defend his position

A position Paul received by Direct Revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ

Let’s read **vs.1-10** together and then pray

I’d like to think on this thought

***“The Issue is Settled”***

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “JERUSALEM CONFERENCE” – vs. 1, 2**

**v.1 - *“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also”***

Paul references another trip to Jerusalem with these believers

There is quite a bit of debate over the exact time of this particular visit

In the book of Acts we find that Paul made a total of five trips to Jerusalem

-- His first trip was from Damascus - **Acts 9:26-30**

This is probably the one referenced in **1:18**

-- Then the visit in which Paul and Barnabas took famine relief to the church at Jerusalem - **Acts 11:27-30; 12:24, 25**

-- Then the Jerusalem Council visit – **Acts 15:1-30**

-- Then the visit at the end of his 2nd missionary journey -

**Acts 18:21, 22**

-- Then there was his final visit – **Acts 21:15 -23:35**

Since the subject of **Galatians 2** parallels **Acts 15**

It would stand to reason that it is the Jerusalem Council trip that Paul has in mind here

Paul now tells us the ‘purpose’ for this trip in …

**v.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”***

Let’s look at 3 thoughts here in **v.2** in regard to this conference

Keep in mind again that Paul is combating this issue in the Galatian churches (and using the Conf. as an illustration)

**A. Paul’s ‘Sanction’ for a Conference**

A Sanction is Official Permission, authorization

Paul says - ***“… I went up by revelation …”***

That is … he went by Permission of God!

**Ps 25:14** ***– “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant”***

Paul's trip to Jerusalem was not the result of his own desires nor was it necessitated by the Jerusalem Church

It was God that told Paul to go!

**B. Paul’s ‘Subject’ at the Conference**

***“…and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,”***

Paul states the Subject of the council was …

*“****that gospel which I preach”***

He ***“communicated unto them that gospel”***

This means that he declared unto them the message he had been preaching

He did not go to find out what to preach or to be instructed how to preach

His Gospel was the one he had received directly from Christ

The issue at the Jerusalem council was the same issue that Paul was now facing in Galatia

(Therefore the use of this illustration)

And that issue was the question of Law vs. Grace

And for Paul, that question had already been settled by the Jerusalem Church at that Council in **Acts 15**

Which occurred before this letter was written (14 yrs)

The Council’s conclusion was that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles without any addition of the law

It was to be the pure Gospel of God's Grace

To which Paul Emphatically Agreed

So if the Gospel Paul was preaching was the Same Gospel to which all the Elders agreed? …

Then why where the Galatian believers deviating?

Why where they then … **1:6 – *“so soon removed”***?

**C. Paul’s ‘Selection’ in Conference**

***“… but privately to them which were of reputation,…”***

This took place first at a meeting attended by the recognized spiritual leaders of the Jerusalem congregation ***“privately”***

The descriptive phrase ***“to them which were of reputation”*** literally means *to the ones who seem to be*

It occurs 3 times - **vs. 2, 6, 9** in various forms

We see it definitely included Peter, John, and James **–v.9**

It might have also refer to the other apostles and elders which could have included converted priests

We see this in **Acts 15:5 – *“But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses”***

The reason for a private meeting over a public one (at first) was to eliminate the danger of public misunderstanding over any theological differences that might have surfaced

Paul did not want to give the enemies of the Gospel any reasons to blaspheme

There is a principle in mind here

**I Timothy 6:1b *– “…that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed”***

He did not want to be in error and he did not want them to be in error

This would have caused confusion

(the False teachers were already doing that)

There is only ***“one faith”*** - **Ephesians 4:5** …

***“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”***

The two groups had to be sure that both were on the same page, preaching the same gospel

There was no room for disagreement

Paul did not want to Divide the Church

Paul had the greater good of God’s work in mind here

That’s why he says - ***“lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain”***

**THE “JERUSALEM CONFERENCE”**

**II. THE “JUDAIZERS CONFRONTED” – vs. 3-5**

Paul points out in **vs.3-5** how so-called brethren had slipped into the Jerusalem Council – **Acts 15:1, 5**

**v.4 – *“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in”***

By calling them ***“false brethren”,*** Paul was saying that they were not true believers

Luke had called them believers in **Acts 15:5**

As we saw in **1:6-10** false teachers are Devious and Destructive

Now they were getting into the churches in Galatia

**A. Paul’s ‘Dispute’ – v.3**

***“But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:”***

This was an open confrontation to the legalist at the Jerusalem council (And in Galatia as well)

He had taken Titus with him for this very purpose

This was a bold move by Paul

The Judaizers passionately pushed the rite of circumcision as necessary for salvation

However, Titus was a living example of someone who became a Christian without circumcision

The Jews required every convert to Judaism to be circumcised and they tried to carry their rules over into the Church and make it a requirement for getting saved

However, Titus wasn't becoming a Jew, he had become a Christian

And the Jerusalem Council did not require him to be circumcised

This proved to the Galatians that the leaders of the Jerusalem church were in agreement with the Gospel of Grace that Paul preached

**B. Paul’s ‘Discernment’ – v.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:”***

Here we see Paul's Discernment is recognizing the presence and purpose of these underhanded Teachers

From this verse we can learn 3 Truths about Legalists

**1.** Their ‘Depravity’

By calling them ***“false brethren”,***

Paul was saying that they were not true believers

These were just Jewish legalists in disguise

They were religious but lost

**2.** Their ‘Deceit’

These were ***“false brethren unawares”***

They had been successful at hiding their true identity

Like the apostates that Jude warned of, they had crept in unawares

**Jude 4 *– “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”***

They had managed to stay under cover

Tares among the wheat

Paul points out that they came in privily

They slipped in under the radar

Paul says they snuck in to - ***“spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus”***

They weren't there to learn

Their concern was not the truth, but the promotion of their own religion

**3.** Their ‘Desire’

Paul says – ***“that they might bring us into bondage”***

They had one major purpose for being there and that was to learn as much as possible so they could try to figure out a way to counter the Gospel of God's Grace

Their driving desire was to bring believers, who were set at liberty from the law through Christ, back under the bondage of the law

**C. Paul’s ‘Determination’ – v.5**

***“To whom we gave place by subjection, No! not for an hour; that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you”***

Paul was Relying on his Saviour, Resting in the Scriptures and Relentless in his Stand

Paul absolutely refused to yield to their doctrine even for the shortest amount of time

Giving them an opportunity to present their position would have given them a measure of credibility and to compromise the True Gospel

It just could not be done!!

The word *“****subjection”*** means *to yield, to give way, to retreat, or to retire*

When it came to defending the Gospel Paul didn't have a compromising bone in his body!

**THE “JERUSALEM CONFERENCE”**

**THE “JUDAIZERS CONFRONTED”**

**III. THE “JOINT CONCLUSION” – vs. 6-10**

Paul's ministry was accepted by the Leadership in the Jerusalem Church

This acceptance is evident in 3 ways

 **A. The ‘Recognition’ of his Calling - vs. 6-8**

**1.** **v. 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 esteemed as leaders in Jerusalem *“****added nothing”***to him

Either to his message or to himself as an apostle

This was remarkable

In **chapter 1**, he had emphasized that his contact with the other apostles had been minimal

Now when he finally did confer with them

…they agreed that he had been preaching the same gospel as they

What an important point this is!

These Jewish leaders agreed that his gospel was not defective in any way

Though Paul had been independent of them, and had not been taught by them, yet the gospel they preached was exactly the same as his own

(I wonder why that was)

Paul’s intent here was not to belittle the other apostles,

He simply states that *“****whatever they were”***

Just because they were apostles first, did not give them any superior authority in his estimation

God does not accept man's person as far as such external distinctions are concerned

**Acts 10:34** ***– “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons”***

**2. vs. 7, 8 – *“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:)”***

The leaders of the Jerusalem church realized and agreed that Paul had been sent to the Gentiles with equal authority and with the same message …

… with which Peter had been sent to the Jews

**B. The ‘Reception’ of his Fellowship - v. 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”***

The ***“pillars”*** of the Jerusalem Church gave Paul and Barnabas the *“****right hand of fellowship”***

This was much more than the handshake that we are familiar with today

It had a much greater significance in the ancient world

The *“****right hand of fellowship”*** signified a pledge of friendship and promise

The leaders of the Jerusalem Church were in full agreement with Paul and totally committed to the same gospel

**C. The ‘Relationship’ in Charity - v.10**

***"They would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do"***

This reminder was an invitation to work together

This was another indication of approval by the church leaders in Jerusalem of Paul's ministry

Indeed Paul was ***“forward”*** - *prompt, enthusiastic* in this work as well!

**CONCLUSION**

So you say what has all this to do with me?

**Jude 3 *– “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”***

That is exactly what Paul is doing!

That is exactly what we must do

**THE “JERUSALEM CONFERENCE”**

**THE “JUDAIZERS CONFRONTED”**

**THE “JOINT CONCLUSION”**

But Paul is not done here

We will see him continue his

**“Defence of Grace”**

… in our next message