

LSB Galatians 2:1 - 10 Paul's Gospel Compared

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 And I went up because of a revelation, and I laid out to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain. 3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 But this was because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us. 5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. 6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised 8 (for He who worked in Peter unto his apostleship to the circumcised worked in me also unto the Gentiles), 9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 Only they asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

Galatians is a polemic argument. We looked at that word polemic just briefly last week. From Wikipedia:

Polemic is contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position by forthright claims and to undermine the opposing position. The practice of such argumentation is called polemics, which are seen in arguments on controversial topics.

That's a fair definition of what we have here in this letter to the churches in the region of Galatia. The church is under attack at Galatia because false teachers have introduced destructive doctrines, and Paul has mounted a strategic defense to argue against the false teachers and re-assert his

original message of faith in Jesus Christ plus nothing.

So let's talk about strategy if you are Satan. If it is in fact true that the gospel of faith in the finished sin bearing work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in our place, on the cross, effectively paying our sin debt as a substitute in our place on that cross, and faith in that finished act proven by His resurrection is the only avenue for salvation, Satan has an easy task.

All he has to do is add stuff to salvation by grace, or subtract from that simple formulaic gospel message enough on either side of that message to render it void of it's power.

If you add works to salvation, it is no longer grace. Salvation by works is void. OR if you subtract the offence of sin and repentance that initially causes the need for salvation, you accomplish the same thing. Salvation is cancelled by lack of a problem. Salvation from what? A God who is angry with me because of sinful rebellion? But Jesus gets me. Sin isn't really a problem. Salvation is void.

Both strategies are equally cancelling. Both adding to and subtracting from the gospel, render it void. So, consider the war Satan has begun to wage with these initial start up churches in the first century.

Paul comes to Derbe, or Iconium, or Antioch and preaches the true gospel and the Holy Spirit quickens a bunch of new believers from death to spiritual life. A church begins and Paul gives them instruction necessary to be self sustaining. The gospel is like yeast that re-creates life in anyone who hears it and believes through these new christians.

Satan's job is to make the message void. Those who are saved are safe, they cannot lose their salvation, they are lost to Satan and gain for the Kingdom of God, but if the gospel is changed, they are effectively the final generation of christians and the whole thing dies out.

The power is in the gospel. The ability of the yeast to reproduce itself is in

the life of the organism. That life is the gospel message. Easy peasey. Mess up the message by adding or subtracting . . . just enough . . . and wait for the generation to die and the whole thing is blown over.

Correct in theory, except for one small statement from Jesus mouth; *I will build my Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* Matthew 16:18 That word prevail should be a wake up call for us. When do you prevail? When there's a war.

And the church has been at war with the gates of Hades for 2000 years. Sometimes with a very very tiny margin of true saints mixed in among the tares.

I discovered something new to me this week. It's always thrilling to me when some little bit of the puzzle is opened up to my eyes spiritually by the Holy Spirit as I think and study.

When Paul states to Timothy in his final words on this earth, just before his death sentence is completed these words that are quite well known among us: *6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, **I have kept the faith.*** 2 Tim. 4:6,7

Our initial understanding is that Paul has finished his life with his faith intact, and it does mean that, but it means much more. That word kept, is the greek word that describes a gaurdian who holds something in trust, who guards something from loss or damage.

Paul spent his entire life doing battle for one cause. To keep this simple gospel message intact as delivered to Him, by Jesus. And here he tells Timothy, I've fought the good fight to keep the gospel intact and potent.

We could make up a simple analogy of someone who is crossing an ocean with some starter for sour dough bread. Through storms and pirates and robbers and whatever else we can dream up to get that bread starter out of

this guardians hands and eliminate it, he makes it to the other shore on his journey and passes that bread starter on to it's next owner.

Theoretically you could make a loaf of bread from a sour dough starter that is millenia old, as long as it is guarded. Paul guarded the gospel, kept it intact and full of it's original power that it was delivered to him with, from Christ, until he passed it on to guardians who would also guard it and keep it intact.

Earlier in that same final message to Timothy, Paul's son in the faith, Paul says; *1 You therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.* 2 Tim. 2:1,2

We are in a battle with the gates of Hades, Satan himself, and our job is to take the treasure entrusted to us, hold it intact, and ultimately pass it on to others who will pass it on to others generationally, unchanged, until Jesus comes. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;* 2 Cor 4:7

In this church we are failing. If it depended on us, Satan would be counting the days until a few old men with gray and white hair are gone. Job done. And that is the main thing I'm seeing as I look around me at what claims to be christian in our world.

In order to cancel the offense of the gospel to a new generation of millenials and beyond, the gospel has been altered to eliminate the message that people are sinfully rebelling against God's Lordship over them. Sin is OK. Jesus gets us. He desperately wants us just the way we are. You can come as you are and apparently stay as you are. No such thing as sin.

Beloved, that's the gospel of the lukewarm church that the real Jesus will spew out of His mouth on the day that HE comes to receive those slaves who truly belong to Him as their Lord and owner.

We are in a battle for the gospel, the Once-for-all-delivered-to-the-saints-faith according to Jude. That gospel is rendered impotent by two methods, which are really the same thing. Add to it, or subtract from it. Render it void. Impotent to reproduce new real life.

I don't care how much 19 year olds sway back and forth and sing kumbaya, if whatever is happening, and there seems to be no end of highly emotionally charged things happening, if it isn't generated by new life, lives transformed from sin and regenerated by grace from God's gospel, it's void. If it doesn't produce holiness and a hunger for the real God in His written Word, it's void.

The real gospel takes people who are sinners, right where they are, generates new life within them, and changes them into the countenance of Jesus. That's the gospel I'm interested in. One that changes sinners into people who adopt holy living. If there's No change, I've got no interest.

Paul spent his life fighting to keep that gospel intact. We are studying the classic defense of an apostle for the true gospel. And Paul has to defend first his authority. In chapter one he defends his apostleship. That's the base line. The gospel came down to us by Jesus to the apostles of the church, and then by guardians who have kept the treasure intact until this day.

So in chapter one Paul has defended his apostleship. Chosen, by Jesus, to be an apostle of the church to bring the true powerful gospel to the gentiles.

Then beginning in vs. 11 of chapter one, Paul begins his defense of his gospel. He was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle of the church, and the gospel he delivers was not given to him by any man, he received it directly from the Lord.

The source of Paul's gospel is the same source of his apostleship. Jesus. Direct revelation from Jesus.

Now this morning we are going further in Paul's defensive argument. He may have been chosen separately from the other apostles, and he got his gospel direct from the Lord who chose him, but where does he become cohesive with the other apostles who are presumably doing the same thing he's doing.

Because that's the argument the judaizers brought. Paul's not an apostle. And his message is different. This is how we do it in Jerusalem. You get circumcised. You adopt judaism with all of it's rituals and ceremonies and the full law of Moses. And then Jesus can be your forgiver. But only if you're working your way to Him through Moses and the law.

Well, who's right. And that's where we're at in chapter 2 in this defense. What would it look like if Paul went to Jerusalem. Would his gospel and his people fit in or be rejected as less than christian by the big boy apostles in Jerusalem? The judaizers claim Paul's gospel would be rejected there.

First I'm an apostle chosen by Jesus. Second my gospel came direct from Jesus. Third . . . am I different from the christians that I became an apostle and got my gospel, independent from? Are there two christianity's running concurrently? The Jerusalem version, and the Paul version?

I Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

This is huge. This is a test. A slap in the face to the brand of christianity that the judaizers presented to the galatian churches. Because Titus is a gentile, and he is an uncircumcised gentile. A christian by Paul's gospel, not the so called Jerusalem gospel according to the claims of the judaizers.

Therefore Titus is a litmus test case. If the judaizers are right, the Jerusalem church should reject first, Titus, then Paul and anyone else who became a christian with Paul's false gospel. Right?

Barnabas is no problem to the Jerusalem church. It was Barnabas who initially received Paul at Jerusalem and put the other apostles at ease that Paul was the real deal in Acts 9. So Barnabas traveling with Paul to Jerusalem is no possible offense to Jews, but Titus totally is. And I believe that's exactly why Paul brings Titus along on this pivotal trip.

Let's read about that event from the book of Acts chapter 15. This is the first convening of a church council to decide on an issue of disagreement within the church. This is a fairly long passage but it's important to Paul's defense. Acts 15:

1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had not a little dissension and debate with them, the brothers determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. 3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, recounting in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brothers. 4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Law of Moses." 6 Both the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." 12 And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were

relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

*13 Now after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying,
“Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first concerned
Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. 15
And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 16*

**‘After these things I will return,
And I will rebuild the fallen booth of David,
And I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will restore it,
17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,’
18 Says the Lord, who makes these things known from long ago.**

*19 Therefore I judge that we do not trouble those who are turning to God
from among the Gentiles, 20 but that we write to them that they abstain
from things contaminated by idols and from sexual immorality and from
what is strangled and from blood. 21 For from ancient generations, Moses
has those who preach him in every city, since he is read in the synagogues
every Sabbath.” 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders,
with the whole church, to choose men from among them—Judas called
Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers—to send to Antioch
with Paul and Barnabas, 23 and they sent this letter by them,
“The apostles and the brothers who are elders, to the brothers in Antioch
and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.
24 Since we have heard that some of us, to whom we gave no instruction,
have gone out and disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls,
25 it seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to select men to send
to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, and they themselves will report
the same things by word of mouth.
28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no
greater burden than these essentials:*

29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from sexual immorality, from which if you keep yourselves, you will do well. Farewell.”

There's a lesson within a lesson in this event. Did James the brother of Jesus add to salvation by telling the gentile saints they should abstain from immorality, eating things sacrificed to idols, blood, and things strangled?

No, the answer is that James doesn't make this a requirement of salvation, rather he asks the gentiles to lean a little in the direction of Jewish Christians for the sake of not being offensive to them. *21 For from ancient generations, Moses has those who preach him in every city, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”*

There are Jews in every city. Gentile Christians shouldn't do things that are upsetting to Jews. It neither adds or subtracts from salvation, but loving your neighbor means you can regulate a few things in order to not be offensive to brothers who come from backgrounds and cultures different from yours.

Paul takes Titus down to Jerusalem to sort of force the issue. These so-called brethren have been troubling the gentile churches with this false doctrine and false gospel, and Paul is going to force a conclusion, one way or the other, he goes to Jerusalem, with Titus, and uncircumcised gentile convert, exhibit A, so to speak, to force a decision.

2 And I went up because of a revelation, and I laid out to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.

It's interesting that the timing of this event was due to a direct revelation to the Apostle from Jesus. I would also add, if you're not a first century apostle, you didn't get a direct revelation from Jesus to do anything. Our orders are written down for us, once for all time, in the book you hold. The apostles who got direct revelation are dead.

Paul went to Jerusalem and met privately with the apostles there and laid out his gospel, in case, somehow, he had run in vain. Paul has enough class to meet privately and compare notes, first.

Before he brings out the big guns he says, listen guys, this is my gospel. Do we have a problem? They did not, but never the less, it was the classy thing to do. Nobody likes a head on collision. Paul doesn't blind side the Jerusalem church and the other apostles with a frontal attack.

3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Listen, I've got Titus with me, he's an uncircumcised gentile convert, and there's a group of guys who claim they came from you folks here, who insist that he has to get circumcised and follow Moses (shorthand for all of judaism) in order to be saved. What say ye?

Did the Jerusalem apostles compel Titus to go get circumcised? No they did not. He's just fine the way the Lord saved him. But the false teachers who had come to Galatia were compelling Titus and all like him to be circumcised and convert to following Moses in order to have Jesus.

4 But this was because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us.

But this . . . What is the this. *This* looks back to this compelling of gentiles to convert to judaism in order to be christians.

Titus was not compelled to embrace Moses, but there was real pushback from the false brothers who were there. It was a problem to the false believers that someone, a gentile, uncircumcised, was claiming to be a christian. So there was real pressure against Titus, but Titus doesn't budge. And notably, the true apostles in Jerusalem did not compel him to be

circumcised.

What about Timothy then? In Acts 16 Paul had Timothy go and get circumcised. Was Paul hypocritical? Confused? No, Timothy's mother was jewish, his father was a greek. It was a different situation for Timothy. Circumcision was not for his salvation, but embracing his jewishness helped Timothy get audiences that weren't going to happen for Titus.

We bend our own freedoms and choices in order to widen our audience. Paul did that. That's what he means when he says I have become all things to all men in Corinthians. Paul put limits and restraints on his own personal freedoms in order to widen his audience.

Even I might do that. Even a curmudgeon like me. If I was going to help Larisa at camp, I might put on a pair of blue jeans. I know. Shocking. Even shorts if it was really hot. I know, right? Wow. Who knew.

We dress appropriate to a group or occasion. The question with Timothy wasn't salvation, it was doing something to be less offensive to an audience. His mom is a jew.

For Titus on the other hand, these men from Jerusalem were saying he had to do this in order to be a christian. Paul says not only NO, but we'll just take Titus on a road trip to the church in Jerusalem y'all say you're from and see what happens.

4 But this was because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us.

Satan enslaves. Sin is transferred from parent to child and sin is a universal enslavement to Satan. Paul's gospel frees us from the slavery of sin. Sin is paid in full. All of it, past, present, and sadly, even future. In my case you can count on future sin. All paid. Sin can never enslave me again. Not eternally anyways. I might foolishly allow it to enslave me by my own

foolish choices, but freedom is available as soon as I come to my senses.

But false doctrine from false brothers is a messenger from Satan to enslave us again. Works righteousness is a slavery that accomplishes hell. If Paul had not fought this fight, there would not have been a next generation of freed Christians. Slavery to Satan would have begun all over again.

5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

Paul says we underwent severe pressure from these false brothers for your benefit. Paul is no man pleaser when it comes to salvation issues. Gospel issues. Add Moses to salvation in order to make the Jewish false brothers happy and accepting? *Me genoito!* God forbid! May it never be!

And yet being a man pleaser is exactly what the Judaizers accused Paul of doing. Back in vs. 10 of chapter 1. *10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ.*

The Judaizers accused Paul of tweaking the real gospel, getting rid of Judaism, in order to make it more palatable and easy for the Gentiles. Paul's the one who lightened up the gospel by getting rid of Moses. Paul is the man pleaser, they said.

Paul had the real gospel and he won't bend an inch toward the Jewish false brethren in order to please men. Two groups butting heads and the poor Christians in Galatia totally confused and bewildered by it all. Who's right.

6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

Paul says two things here. One is veiled. First, his gospel got nothing added or subtracted by the other apostles. His gospel was in lock step

unison with the gospel Peter and the other apostles also preached. That's the obvious thing. Paul neither needed to add anything or subtract anything to be the same gospel as the Jerusalem apostles.

Second is this. Paul can't help but add; *those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)*
There is no hierarchy in the church. Every man who carries and guards the treasure, the gospel, is the same as every other man.

This hierarchy of ranks and levels that we fallen human's cannot seem to avoid is dispelled here by Paul. He isn't being dis-respectful to the other apostles. What he's saying is they don't deserve more respect because they are the Jerusalem apostles that walked with Jesus. No tiers and ranks.

God shows no partiality. No rankings. No military rank and order. You know where I'm going, right? No pope. No cardinals. No arch bishops. No bishops. No priests. No authority above the role of Elder's who rule well over the local churches. But even elders have no authority. All they have is orders from above to shepherd and teach. Feed my sheep, Jesus told Peter.

So Paul says, this whole idea of so called High Reputation is a problem in it's infancy. God shows no partiality. But on the other hand, Paul went to those guys to compare notes, not to the rank and file congregants in the Jerusalem church. God does appoint leaders in every place. There is order.

7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised

See the beautiful equality in that verse. Peter and Paul are equivalents in this verse. **God** entrusted Peter with the gospel to the circumcised, the jews, and the same **God** entrusted Paul with the same gospel to the gentiles, the uncircumcised. The gospel is a trust. The gospel is the treasure. The apostles and guardians after them are mere men who hold and distribute God's valuable treasure.

It pleased God to send one man to the jews and one man to the gentiles, as apostles of the church, and it pleased God to send the same gospel to both groups, and it pleased Him to do it separately and independently of each other. But when the issue was forced after some years, by false teachers troubling the gentiles, it was indeed the same gospel.

Vs. 8 is the bottom line. This is the final proof.

8 (for He who worked in Peter unto his apostleship to the circumcised worked in me also unto the Gentiles),

The Holy Spirit producing transformed lives via the same gospel to very disparate groups is the result. One gospel, two very different cultures. That gospel caused spiritual life through forgiveness of sins to gentiles and to jews.

People say Peter and Paul had a different gospel?? Well, excuse me but they both just said exactly the same thing. Peter, at the council in Acts 15;

*“Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving **them** the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to **us**; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.*

Pauls gospel and Peter's gospel had the same effect. The Holy Spirit came to quicken dead spirits to life and then dwell inside both uncircimcised gentiles who heard Paul and jews who heard Peter. No distinction.

That's the bottom line. The Holy Spirit causing regeneration in real believers. Jews listened to the gospel and were born again. Gentiles listened to the same gospel and were born again. It is incidental who brings the message. The Spirit quickens the dead to life with the power of the true gospel message.

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Only one thing would make this verse even better. Well, actually, that's impossible for it to be better because it's the word of God breathed out by God, so it can't be more perfect.

But I can't help but wish Titus was included here receiving the right hand of fellowship along with Paul and Barnabas. Was that a bridge too far for the folks at Jerusalem? We'll have to ask when we get to heaven.

In any case, the gospels are compared and found to be the same. Nothing needs to be added to Paul's. The brothers who came troubling the churches in Galatia were not sent there by the Jerusalem apostles, and in fact, Paul and Barnabas received the right hand of fellowship from James and Peter and John. Accepted as is, no changes needed. Problem solved.

10 Only they asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

No changes to the gospel necessary, however, it would be nice for a little reciprocal action. The Jerusalem church sends it's blessing to the gentile brothers everywhere. And a little love coming back our direction would also be well received.

It turns out that at Pentecost, where up to a million sojourners from everywhere on earth had descended on Jerusalem, suddenly, Peter preaches and people from all over the place . . . got saved. The church was born.

If that happens to you, what do you do? Well they stayed in Jerusalem and it became a challenge. A whole bunch of refugees, wanting to stay at Jerusalem, the church is brand new, if they go home, there's no other

christians to fellowship with, so they stayed in Jerusalem and that church was large, and poor.

Paul took up collections everywhere from the gentile brothers to help relieve the poverty of the christians in Jerusalem. Not a salvation issue. At all. But it was beautiful evidence that the salvation of these gentiles was real that their hearts were sympathetic to jewish christians who were suffering in that situation there.