

Galatians 2:1-6 – Truth is Confirmed – Salvation is by Grace Only

Lightfoot, Family, TSK, GreekLexicon, Rienecker, Eadie, Geneva, Expositors, Handfuls, Clarke, Eclectic, PNT, Robertson, JFB, Henry, Calvin, Beloved in the Lord: Apostle Paul was concerned the Galatian Christians were being deceived by those who were peddling a false Gospel of **salvation by works**. So he warned them of the danger they were in because of the false Gospel. These false teachers, however, still convinced some that Apostle Paul was **either not authoritative or he wasn't telling the truth**. So Apostle Paul went further to **prove he had the authority to say what he said** and **prove he was speaking the truth**. To do this, he describes his interaction with the other earlier Apostles of Jesus to prove **he had the authority to say what he said** and **that his message was Gospel truth**. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Apostle Paul proved he was preaching Gospel truth

Apostle Paul proved Old Testament ceremonies were fulfilled

Apostle Paul proved all men were saved by the Gospel not by ceremonies

Our goals are: **That you will make sure you are preaching the full Gospel, the only means by which men and women who receive it, are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.**

Apostle Paul proved he was preaching Gospel truth

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

2 And **I went up by revelation**, and **communicated to them that gospel** which I preach among the Gentiles, **but privately to those who were of reputation**, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

1. While Apostle Paul did not need to get the approval of the Apostles in Jerusalem to prove his authority and message he was preaching, for he had received it directly from the Lord, yet he went to them so they could hear it.

Doing this would remove doubts from these Apostles' minds. (There were some troublemakers who were reporting lies concerning what the Apostle Paul was preaching.)

And if the other Apostles confirmed what Apostle Paul said, this would remove doubts from the Galatians' minds. They would know Apostle Paul was speaking the truth about **salvation only being by grace, through faith, in Christ alone**.

2. Apostle Paul went to Jerusalem 14 years after his first going up there.

His first going to Jerusalem was 3 years after his conversion – and was only there for 15 days.

This showed he was confident with what he was saying. He didn't need the Apostles' approval to fulfill his duty. The brethren in Jerusalem did not have to approve Apostle Paul's teaching or commission him to his duty.

3. Apostle Paul took Barnabas and Titus with him to the Apostles in Jerusalem. Why?

a. Multiple witnesses confirm truth. Barnabas and Titus would confirm what they heard from Apostle Paul and what they heard from the other Apostles.

b. Titus was a Gentile. He was a convert. He was uncircumcised. He was now a preacher. So **Apostle Paul was confidently displaying the Gospel and its fruits**. He was not worried about them demanding Titus be circumcised or be forced to follow the Jewish ceremonial laws.

4. Apostle Paul went up there by God's decree.

This proved he was approved by God and could not be contradicted by the Apostles. If they did, he would be like the unnamed prophet who was fooled by the godly prophet to go into his house for food and water and then cause him to be killed.

5. Apostle Paul consulted with the leaders there (the ones with reputation as leaders) to talk about what he was doing and saying!

He wisely did not take the unlearned or the foolish ones who might respond emotionally. Remember how some Jewish people swore to kill Apostle Paul because their customs were being violated?

6. Lessons:

a. Since you are not an Apostle, if you are not sure about a doctrine or a theological point, or if you wonder if you are explaining things correctly, ask a more mature, knowledgeable, godly brother, and elder, or a pastor. This will not only save you from making mistakes, it will also assure you that you are holding on to truth. Notice, I did not say go to popular people who sell millions of books.

b. Asking for advice to make sure you are doing what is right is essential and evidences spiritual maturity!

c. The Gospel you must preach must be unadulterated with human element and must not include the requirement of any ceremonies or good works that have been fulfilled. Baptism doesn't save. Praying doesn't save. Church membership doesn't save.

d. Be patient when people don't always agree with what you say. Look how hard Apostle Paul worked to convince the

Galatians of what he was saying. He could easily have said, “Stop it, do what I tell you.” But he took time to prove his point.

Apostle Paul proved the Old Testament ceremonies were fulfilled

3 Yet **not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.** 4 And this occurred because of **false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus,** that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

1. After the Apostles heard what Apostle Paul said, and knowing it to be the same truth Jesus taught them, they confirmed he was speaking the truth.

2. There were some notable false brethren around who were concerned about the liberty new Christians were enjoying, so they moved in by stealth – secretly- to try to convict them for abandoning the ceremonies of the Old Testament.
They literally wanted to bring new believers into bondage of the law.

3. To prove the signs and ceremonies were completed in Jesus, they confirmed Titus did not have to be circumcised – the most common Old Testament ceremony.

The leaders of the church realized circumcision was no longer necessary, having been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

If he submitted Titus to be circumcised, he would have caused other Gentiles to become subject to the law.

It wasn't sinful to be circumcised, but it was not necessary.

So back to the situation in Galatia, Apostle Paul was telling them that the Judaizers who were pushing new Christians to submit to the old ceremonies as part of their salvation were dead wrong!

In the case of Timothy in Acts 16, Apostle Paul had circumcised him, **not from obligation, but out of deference** to the views of Jewish Christians. In other words, the Jews would listen more to him and Timothy if he were circumcised. This is similar to James Hudson Taylor who dressed and lived as Chinese when he served as missionary there.

4. Apostle Paul stood up to deceitful men who were bringing false reports about him to the Apostles in Jerusalem (just as he had to stand up to the Judaizers in Galatia).

But could there be something as “false brethren?” **These were called brethren to identify them,** but they were not real brothers in the Lord. They were wolves in sheep's clothing. So Apostle Paul did not budge a millimeter to them. He stood up with what he was **told by the Lord and confirmed by the Apostles** and proclaimed that **the Gospel (not circumcision) that saves.**

2Corinthians 2: 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, **but as from God, we speak** in the sight of God in Christ.

2Corinthians 4: 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, **not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully,** but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And he constantly warned against the Devil and his people who would continually fight against the church.

Romans 16: 17 Now I urge you, brethren, **note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.** 18 For those who are such **do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.**

These devils literally mutilated the Scriptures. (Philippians 3:2)

5. Lessons:

a. Don't tell people to do more than God has told them to do. Consider some examples of going farther than God required. One church in Hamilton would not accept you as a member unless you join one of their “small groups.” Some churches here in Toronto demand to see people's T4 in order to tell them how much they must tithe. Some churches demand parents homeschool their children. Doing these things don't contribute to your salvation.

b. But the big issue here is this: Don't demand good works as a means of salvation. No one can add a sigh to his salvation.

c. When there is a grave crisis, stand up! Don't hide.

d. There is nothing wrong in being circumcised, but don't think circumcision is required to please God! It absolutely can't. It gives no saving merit before God.

Apostle Paul proved all men were saved by the Gospel not by ceremonies

6 But from those who seemed to be something — whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man — **for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.**

1. There were still those in Jerusalem who opposed the Gentiles because of their past separation from God, not understanding it was God's plan all along to include Gentiles into his kingdom, so they rejected the idea of the signs and ceremonies not being demanded of the Gentiles.

To make matters worse, some Christians in Jerusalem continued to do some of these ceremonies, including circumcising their sons. These people thought they knew everything but didn't.

2. More, Apostle Paul declared those Christian Jews in Jerusalem, particularly leaders like Peter, James, and John, were not more special by virtue of their history with Jesus or their place of residence. God was using Apostle Paul and God used them. All of the Apostles had the same office.

This was why the other Apostles gave him no new instructions or authority. In fact, they had no change to suggest in the gospel he preached.

3. More, the Apostles gave their right hand of fellowship and full acknowledgment that Apostle Paul was speaking the truth.

4. Lessons:

a. Listen to people who know – especially in spiritual matters - so you can learn.

b. Avoid people who are “know-it-all” but know little. The Facebook theologian who doesn't go to church...or doesn't take care of his family, is no one to listen to.

c. Listen to other people for their sakes as well. Listen so you can correct them if they are wrong.

d. Even if people disagree or mock you, if you believe what the Scripture says, hold on to it.

Conclusion:

Using the Apostles in Jerusalem, Apostle Paul proved he was preaching the full Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and not aided by any human work or ceremony. He proved the Old Testament ceremonies were fulfilled in Jesus.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Know God's truth about salvation so you can speak with knowledge and confidence, and shine the light of the Gospel to those who are groping in darkness, trying to find their way out.

2. Be prepared to not take it personally when people criticize you for holding on to the pure Gospel and heralding the pure Gospel. You aren't in this world to be liked. More, they will answer to the Savior.

3. Support those who are preaching the full Gospel. Avoid those who aren't, even if they are popular and well-liked. God will ask you if you joined with, prayed for, encouraged, and financially and publicly support those who are preaching the full Gospel.

Finally: It is humiliating to know you can do nothing to save yourself but you are only saved if you receive what Jesus has to offer – his life and death as yours! **Acknowledge your need or you will be lost forever.** Humble yourself before the Lord and ask for the work of Christ to be counted as yours and he will give you eternal life.