

## Exploring Galatians – Study 6 – The Search for Unity

Read Gal 2:1-10

Today we start our study on Galatians Chapter 2. Our reading today is from Gal 2:1-10. These verses can be divided into three main sections, firstly, the reason for Paul's trip to Jerusalem (1-2), secondly the dispute (3-5) and thirdly an account of the visit to Jerusalem (6-10).

### **A Comparison of Apostolic Gospels**

1. Galatians 1 proves that Paul got his gospel independently of the Jerusalem apostles.
2. Galatians 2:1-10 demonstrates that this gospel is identical with theirs.
3. It is that shared gospel that provides the basis for unity.

*Do you agree with Knight that the gospel is the key foundation for Christian Unity? Explain?*

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<sup>1</sup> Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians (Kindle Locations 777-779). Review & Herald. Kindle Edition.

### Paul's Second Trip to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1-2)

Read (again) Gal 2:1-2.

Paul says that he went up to Jerusalem because of the revelation of the Gospel given to him. He went at the urging of the Holy Spirit, he was not summoned. He took with him Titus and Barnabas. Paul then presented this revelation to the key early church leaders in Jerusalem.

*How does this show Paul's concern for unity in the early church?*

"The apostle believed in church order and in working with other leaders, even when serious differences stood between them".<sup>1</sup>

*What lessons can we learn from this for today?*

### The Dispute (Gal 2:3-5)

Read (again) Gal 2:3-5

Commenting especially on Gal 2:5, John Stott observes, the "matter of fundamental importance" had to do with the "truth of the gospel, namely, of Christian freedom versus bondage. The Christian has been set free from the law in the sense that his acceptance

before God depends entirely upon God's grace in the death of Jesus Christ received by faith. To introduce the works of the law and make our acceptance depend on our obedience to rules and regulations was to bring a free man into bondage again." (Stott, p. 43).<sup>2</sup>

### The Result of the Visit (Gal 2:6-10)

Read (again) Gal 2:6-10.

Paul's revelation was fully accepted by the Leaders in Jerusalem. It was the same gospel that Peter and others had been preaching to the circumcised. The gospel united among the diversity. This also led to an "evangelistic plan" for outreach to the different communities.

*What lessons can we learn from this and apply today?*

Paul was particularly asked to remember the poor. We read in Galatians 2:10 (ESV), "<sup>10</sup> Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do".

*Why does the Lord time and time again (in the OT and NT) ask his people to remember the Poor (and also other socially disadvantaged groups)?*

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<sup>2</sup> Knight, George. Exploring Galatians & Ephesians (Kindle Locations 799-804). Review & Herald. Kindle Edition

### In Summary

#### **And what had the meeting accomplished?**

"Paul," James Montgomery Boice writes, "has done the following:

"(1) recognized the position and authority of the Jerusalem apostles without diminishing his own authority in the slightest;

"(2) indicated, in opposition to the exaggerated claims about them made by the legalizers, that the apostles were men after all and hence not always perfect in their initial reactions or conduct;

"(3) decisively separated the gospel and policies of the Twelve, for all their weaknesses, from the gospel and policies of the legalizers; and

"(4) taken note of the fact that he and the Twelve, rather than the legalizers and the Twelve, stood together" (Boice, p. 443).

### Pray and Prayer Requests

Thank God for our unity with other Christians. Pray that the Lord will keep his church united even in the midst of some differences and diversity.