

Exegetical Notes – Galatians 2:1-10

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Galatians 2:1-10

Verses 1-3

¹ Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ² I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

- See Acts 11.
- Fourteen years after his experience with Christ on the Damascus Road (see Acts 9) Paul again went to Jerusalem to visit the leaders of the Church. He took with him Barnabas, a Jew who had accepted Jesus as Savior, and Titus, a Greek who had accepted Christ without ever being a Jew.
- Paul went to Jerusalem “in response to a revelation.” He went because he felt led by God to do so. He met privately with the recognized leaders of the Church and laid out before them the gospel he preached to the non-Jews. His purpose was to be sure that what he was preaching was acceptable. He did not want to be acting in contradiction to that taught by the rest of the Church.
- Those in authority approved what Paul was preaching. They did not even require Titus to be circumcised or become Jewish. They accepted him as a Christian without requiring him to become a Jew first.

Verses 4-5

⁴ This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵ We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

- Paul had been confronted by some “false teachers” prior to his visit to Jerusalem. These teachers were “Judaizers.” They taught that people who converted to Christianity first needed to become Jews. They contended that all Christian men were required to be circumcised before they could accept Christ as Savior and that all Christians were required to practice the dietary laws and other parts of the ceremonial law of the Jews. Paul disagreed with their teaching as is evident in the life of Titus, who is with Paul. Titus was not circumcised and yet Paul regarded him as a leader in the church. These teachers had infiltrated the churches Paul had founded in Galatia and were causing great confusion among the Christians there.
- Paul had rejected the teaching of the Judaizers (see Galatians 1:6-9).

Verses 6-10

⁶As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. ⁷On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. ⁸For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

- Those with whom Paul met in Jerusalem agreed with his message and requested no changes in what he was teaching. They agreed that Paul had been called to call non-Jews to Christ, just as Peter had been called to call Jews to Christ.
- James, Cephas (Peter), and John were among those with whom Paul met. Most likely, Paul mentions these three specifically because they were the authorities the Judaizers quoted as supporting their teachings. These three extended the “right hand of fellowship,” an act of official welcome, to Paul and Barnabas, but they did not include Titus in this official greeting. Jews were forbidden from having fellowship with non-Jews. James, Peter, John, Paul and Barnabas had all been Jews before accepting Jesus as their Savior. Titus has never converted to Judaism, so he was excluded from the official welcome given to Paul and Barnabas.

- That Paul takes issue with this exclusion is indicated by the wording of the text in verse 6. He is not entirely happy with the reception he received in Jerusalem by those with whom he met there. While they accept his message and his ministry, their treatment of Titus does not sit well with Paul. While they agree that non-Jews can be added to the Church without becoming Jews firsts, they, themselves, will only preach and fellowship with Jews who have come to Jesus. While Paul is silent in this matter here, he will not remain so for long.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on Galatians 2:1-10. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship &The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)