

Sunday, November 13, 2022—Galatians 2:3-6 Paul’s Account of the Jerusalem Council Meeting

Galatians 2:3

- **But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:**
- As stated earlier, Paul wanted to see if they would require Titus to be circumcised before they would have fellowship with them.
- The use of the word “compelled” clearly indicates that some tried to convince Titus that he needed to be circumcised. The Greek word translated “compelled” here means “to necessitate, compel, drive to, constrain” according to *Strong’s Concordance*.

Galatians 2:4

- **And that because of false brethren unawares brought in**
- Paul thought he was having a private meeting in verse 2 but it turned out that somehow false brethren had entered the meeting.
- The text says that these brethren were brought in “unawares.” This expression means “secretly or surreptitiously brought in, one who has stolen in” according to *Strong’s Concordance*.
- **“who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:”**
- Notice that these false brethren entered “privily” into the meeting. The word translated “privily” in your King James Bible means.
 - to come in secretly or by stealth, or creep or steal in,
 - to enter in addition, come in besides.
- In other words, these were uninvited guest that somehow secretly wormed their way into what Paul thought was to be a private meeting.
- The covert nature of this operation is obvious by Paul’s use of the term “spy out.” Once again, the Greek word translated “spy out” in the King James Version means “to inspect, view closely, in order to spy out and plot against”. In the context, these false brethren covertly infiltrated this meeting in an attempt to spy out and plot against Gentile liberty in Christ.
- Why are they seeking to “spy out” Gentile liberty in Christ? Paul answers, so “that they might bring us into bondage.” The Judaizers did not like the liberty or freedom that the Gentile believers possessed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were seeking to bring them back under the bondage of the Law.

- Galatians 5:1-3—in Paul’s mind, when he refers to being in bondage, he is talking about being under the Law. These false brethren had entered their midst in an attempt to bring them under the bondage of the Law.
- Notice who Paul considers false brethren. Anyone who is attempting to place people under the bondage of the Law. Anyone who desires to take away your liberty. According to Paul’s standard, false brethren are everywhere today.

Galatians 2:5

- **To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**
- What was Paul’s response to these false brethren? Paul utterly refuted their arguments and refused to be in subjection to them even for one hour.
- Paul did not yield one inch to these people. Paul’s pulpit was not a forum for the discussion of various views; it was the place where the truth of God was preached.
- Modern churchianity talks of love at the expense of conviction. There are very few who obey Paul’s instruction to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and fight the good fight. The Christian world talks a lot about setting aside our differences and uniting for the sake of Christ. Is it not ironic that, when shown the error of their ways from the Word of God rightly divided, the love they flaunt is not extended toward us?

Galatians 2:6

- **But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:)**
- Remember from verse 2 that Paul’s intention was to explain the gospel that he had been preaching among the Gentiles privately to those who were of reputation (Peter, James, John). In verse 4, we learned that false brethren had snuck into the meeting for the purpose of spying out and plotting against Gentile liberty.
- The big question in verse 6 revolves around who the expression “these who seemed to be somewhat” is referring to? Is Paul speaking about the apostles of reputation, the false brethren, or a combination of both?
- In my view, I believe Paul is referring to the leaders of reputation, namely Peter, James, and John. We already know what Paul thinks of those who undividedly crash this meeting; he calls them false brethren.
- C. R. Stam believes that Paul is referring specifically to James. Pastor Stam writes, “the James referred to here is not the same James of the four gospels, Peter, James, and John”. The apostle James had already been killed by wicked King Herod (Acts 12:2). The James referred to here in Galatians 2 is James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:19) and for that reason he had attained superiority over the twelve apostles and the church at Jerusalem.” (Stam, 72)

- Peter was the rightful leader of the Little Flock.
 - Matthew 16:19
 - Acts 1:15, 2:14, 5:29
- **for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:**
- The leaders of repute added nothing to Paul's understanding. This certainly is an interesting statement. These Apostles who had been with Christ during His earthly ministry were not able to tell Paul anything he did not already know. Remember, Paul had been a Pharisee and knew the Old Testament.

Works Cited

Stam, C.R. *Commentary on Galatians*. Germantown, WI: Berean Bible Society, 1998.