

Confirmed in Jerusalem

Galatians 2: 1-10

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been working against the plans and purposes of God regarding humanity. As one reads the Scriptures, a pattern of resistance and opposition is prevalent against those who sought to proclaim the truth. The prophets of old were persecuted and their words were rejected. Jesus was not received as the Son of God, being rejected and crucified with the consent of the Jewish elite. The apostles faced continued persecution and opposition. As the church began to grow, she felt the hand of persecution as well. The same continues in our day. Satan opposes the truth of God's Word and those who proclaim the Word.

Paul was certainly no different in regard to persecution and opposition. Granted, his being part of those who vigorously persecuted the church added to the skepticism of some, but even within the church, Satan had influenced many who opposed the ministry of Paul. In the text before us, Paul reveals the encounter he had in Jerusalem and the affirmation he received there. This should have put to rest many of the accusations and concerns regarding his calling and ministry. As we examine the [events](#) described in the text, I want to consider: [Confirmed in Jerusalem](#).

I. Paul's Entrance at Jerusalem (1-2) – In these opening verses, we discover Paul's arrival in Jerusalem following a lengthy absence. Consider:

A. The Time Elapsed (1a) – [Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem](#). It had been fourteen years since Paul's brief visit to Jerusalem which he described in the previous passage. He had left the city after getting acquainted with Peter and continued his ministry in the regions of Syria and Cilicia. He doesn't reveal any further communication with the other apostles. Paul was content to follow the leadership of the Spirit, preaching the gospel where the Lord desired. (Some scholars believe this return to Jerusalem was for the Jerusalem council recorded in [Acts 15](#). It was at this council, the church debated the very issues Paul is seeking to combat in Galatia – the demands of adhering to law and tradition in addition to grace for salvation. (Application – Like Paul, we need to continue serving the Lord faithfully according to His plans and purposes, even if it feels as if we are serving in obscurity.)

B. The Team Assembled (1) – [Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also](#). As Paul returned to Jerusalem, he did not make the trip alone. Barnabas and Titus accompanied him on his return. Barnabas was well known to those within the church at Jerusalem. When Paul originally came to Jerusalem, following his conversion, Barnabas brought him to the apostles declaring the validity of his conversion and ministry, [Acts 9:27](#). In [Acts](#)

11, Barnabas was sent by the church in Jerusalem to go to Antioch and support the believers there. Following his arrival in Antioch, he departed to Tarsus to seek Paul, [Acts 11:25](#). This began their work together on Paul's first missionary journey.

➤ It is interesting, and a strategic move, that Paul brought Titus with him to Jerusalem. Titus, being an uncircumcised Gentile, who was also a committed believer in Christ and proclaimer of the gospel, would assist Paul in his argument against such legalism and attacks on the gospel of faith in Christ alone.

C. The Truth Expressed (2) – [And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.](#) Paul's return to Jerusalem was not based on any personal motives. He was led of the Lord to return to Jerusalem in order to defend and further affirm his call to preach unto the Gentiles. He reasoned privately with "[those of the reputation](#)" regarding his ministry to the Gentiles and their salvation by grace, which was no different than the gospel being preached by the other apostles and the miraculous salvation of the Jews. He argued that if these were not being genuinely saved, as were many Jews, his ministry of seventeen years, at this point, would have been in vain. (We cannot limit God in His dealings with humanity. We received the call to take the gospel to the nations and we ought to expect the salvation of the nations!)

II. Paul's Encounter at Jerusalem (3-5) – Here Paul describes the encounter he and Titus had with Judaizers upon returning to Jerusalem. Notice:

A. The Presence of Titus (3) – [But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.](#) Again, I am convinced Paul brought Titus with him in order to oppose the addition of works to salvation, demanded by the Judaizers, and present a case in point of the genuine conversion of a Gentile. While the Judaizers would have liked to have demanded the circumcision of Titus to be accepted as a true believer, they did not compel him to endure such a demand. (We must guard against any form of addition to the gospel of grace. While circumcision is not a hot topic today, many congregations have expectations and demands outside of faith in Christ alone.)

B. The Plan of the Judaizers (4) – [And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.](#) Paul shared with the Galatians his encounter with the Judaizers in Jerusalem, much like the arguments and demands they sought to place on the Galatian believers. These false brethren, "fake Christians," were brought in purposely to spy on Paul and Titus, seeking to hear what Paul would

say in defense of Titus as a Gentile. Their plan was to saddle Titus with legalistic bondage, apart from faith in Christ alone, and force Paul to preach such bondage to the Gentiles among whom he ministered. (Sadly, this continues in the church today. There are those within denominations and associations of churches who serve as “gatekeepers” to keep the brethren in “check.”)

C. The Persistence of Paul (5) – *To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* Paul refused to give the legalistic Judaizers even an hour of his time. He was gracious with those to whom he ministered, but he had no time for nonsense regarding the true gospel. (We must guard the truth while being committed to faithfully proclaim the truth. However, we are not expected to entertain the foolishness of those who seek to distort and hinder the proclamation of truth.)

III. Paul’s Endorsement in Jerusalem (6-10) – In *verse 6*, Paul reveals his lack of concern for the thoughts of the Judaizers. He was not seeking their approval. He was committed to the call received of the Lord. Although the Judaizers continued to resist him, Paul shared the endorsement he received by Peter, James, and John. Notice, we see:

A. A Sovereign Arrangement (7-8, 9b) – *But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; ⁸ (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) ^{9b} that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.* Paul reveals the approval of the council regarding his work among the Gentiles. The testimony of his faithfulness and the work of God among the Gentiles affirmed Paul’s calling to the council. They agreed that Paul had been sent unto the Gentiles in the same way that Peter was sent to the Jews. It seems apparent that the majority of the council saw the sovereign hand of God at work in Paul’s ministry and affirmed him in his ministry.

B. A Supportive Acceptance (9b) – *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.* For those who continued to question Paul’s apostleship and commitment to the gospel, he revealed the support of known leaders within the church and heroes of the faith – Peter, James, and John. During the council, Paul and Barnabas were affirmed as part of the church in Jerusalem, receiving the right hand of fellowship. For those who questioned Paul, this should have put their concerns to rest.

➤ Paul reveals a significant part of accountability and affirmation for those in ministry – being affirmed within the local church. This is the biblical model for ministry. I am very skeptical of any preacher, evangelist, or ministry that is not part of, and accountable to, a local church.

C. A Simple Appeal (10) – *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* Finally, Paul reveals the only request the apostles made regarding his ministry to the Gentiles – that he would be faithful to support and help the poor, which he was happy to accommodate. There was no mention by the Jerusalem council of any outside behaviors or rituals that one must adhere to in order to be saved and accepted within the church. This was not given as a matter of salvation, but an act that affirms ones' salvation. We don't work to obtain salvation – we work because of salvation. *Eph.2:8-10 – For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Conclusion: It is clear that Paul rested in the grace of God alone for his justification in faith. He was not saved according to works, nor was he preaching a gospel of works. He refused to abandon the truth of the gospel to appease the desires and dictates of men. He preached the gospel and called upon those to whom he preached to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith unto salvation. Works would naturally follow, but they had no bearing on ones' salvation. This is the biblical doctrine of salvation and the true gospel. It is the gospel we must preach – faith in the finished work of Christ by grace alone!