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The book of Galatians (Part 2) (Gal 3:1-6:18)

Last week we explored the unique connection between Paul & Peter. They both were given special Apostolic Commissions by Christ. They both had revelations about Christ's desire for the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. They both were totally committed to the idea that Salvation was by Grace through Christ and could never be attained by keeping the Law.

We also saw that Paul considered that **adding** Law Keeping to **Salvation by Faith**, distorted the gospel and was totally unacceptable. Peter and other Jews witnessed the Gifts of the Spirit in Cornelius and his household, even before baptism. Paul reminded the Galatians that they too had been saved and baptised in the Spirit long before these new teachers came along and tried to enforce a **FAITH plus Works, version of Salvation.**

The historical growth of the Church demonstrates very clearly that the Jewish Synagogues throughout the Roman Empire played a significant role in the growth of the church. The Jewish communities were constituted by 3 groups:

- Natural Born Jews
- Gentiles who had converted to Judaism, were committed to the Torah and circumcised.
- Gentiles who worshipped Yahweh.

Without that springboard the growth of the church beyond Judea may have been impossible.

Gal 2:11-20 Accommodating different views within the faith has NEVER BEEN EASY- even today.

Last week we observed what Paul states in his criticism of Peter, that Peter was comfortable fellowshiping with the Gentile believers, but failed to do so after the representatives came from James. The Judean Christians were obviously still finding the transition to the decision of the Council of Jerusalem very difficult in practice.

This is the reality that Paul is addressing in Galatians.

What is the significance of v: 15-16 and v 19-20?

THE COVENANTS IN GALATIANS

Paul identifies 3 COVENANTS in Galatians.

1. **Abrahamic Covenant.**
2. **Sinaitic (Mosaic) Covenant.**
3. **New Covenant.**

Gal 3:1-4:7

Paul takes the view the PROMISES by God to Abraham could not be subordinated to the Mosaic Laws given 430yrs later. Jewish history portrays a constant pattern of turning away from the Mosaic Laws by the worship of other gods, and repeated intermarriage. That's why Peter at the Counsel of Jerusalem points out those failures as a good reason not laying the burden of the Law on the Gentiles.

Would it be true to say that ABRAHAMIC COVENANT was based on Faith & Relationship?

Did the Torah (Law) contain valuable MORAL PRINCIPLES?

IF the answer to the above is YES, then why does Paul refer to it as a CURSE?

Was it possible to have a Faith, Spirit led relationship with God from the time of Moses to the time of Christ?

Why did the TORAH block the promise made to Abraham that God intended to BLESS ALL NATIONS (GENTILES)?

Was the MOSAIC COVENANT primarily intended to KEEP THE JEWS as a VIABLE presence in the world till the time of the NEW COVENANT?

Is this why the LAW was a “Guardian”?

How did the MOSAIC COVENANT help the preservation of ISRAEL?

DANGERS OF THE LAW

Gal 4: 10 Observing Special Days, months seasons or years.

Rom 14: 5-10 Observing food laws, or special days, should be based on own conscience.

Col 2: 16 “Therefore do not let anyone judge you, by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”

Gal 5:1 -6

Trying to be Justified by the law = alienation from Christ, a fall from grace (another gospel)

“In Christ: neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value” is used more than once by Paul. Last week we talked about the implications of TIMOTHY being circumcised.

Would it be true to say that PAUL taught by word or deed that MOTIVATION or REASON is more significant than the ACTION ITSELF?

Would it be true to say that Sabbath Keeping, food laws, etc are fine in and of themselves, but as soon as they are considered NECESSARY FOR SALVATION the line has been well and truly crossed?

BENEFITS OF LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Gal 3: 26-29

EQUALITY in Christ.

Is it a major surprise that SOCIETY and the CHURCH still has problems with these today?

Gal 5:5 “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”.

Gal 5: 13 “ Serve one another humbly in love”.

Gal 5: 14 “ The entire law is fulfilled ... in one command: Love your neighbour as yourself”.

Gal 5:22-26 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT...”Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness ETC.?

Gal 6:1-4 instructions for dealing with others who are struggling with sin.

“You who are led by the Spirit should restore that person GENTLY... ETC, ETC”.

Can a LEGALISTIC CHRISTIAN ever judge anyone GENTLY?