

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Two Gospels?

By Michael R. Baggett

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal. 2:7-9).

There are some who believe that because Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and Peter was the apostle to the Jews there must have been two different messages. In other words, some set forth there was one gospel for the Jews and one gospel for the Gentiles.

It should be noted upfront that while Peter preached primarily to the Jews, he was the first to unlock the doors of the kingdom to the Gentiles by preaching to Cornelius and other Gentiles in Acts Chapter Ten. Peter commanded that the Gentiles be baptized in the name of the Lord just like he would teach the Jews (Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48). What did Paul preach that was different? As we shall see shortly, Paul preached the same gospel.

Two gospels are entirely in the imaginations of men. Jesus never mentioned two gospels. Jesus promised His Apostles when the Holy Spirit comes, they would be guided into all truth (John 16:13; Acts 2:1-4). When we think about the truth, the gospel, and the faith, these words are used to pertain to the same doctrine or body of inspired information we read in the New Testament.

Jesus said, *“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). There is truth and there is error, but there are not two truths that oppose one another. Jesus also said, *“Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). God’s word is the only standard for truth (1 Pet. 4:11).

Paul, when warning the churches of Galatia writes in Galatians 1:6-9: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”* Paul makes it clear there is no room for another gospel. In view of what we just read, would it be possible for Paul to preach one gospel and Peter another gospel and one of them not be accursed? Let it be noted that Peter and Paul had fellowship in the gospel (Gal. 2:9). Further, Peter endorsed what Paul taught by calling it *“scripture”* (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Some claim that Paul introduced the gospel of grace for the Gentiles, setting forth that Peter and Paul preached differently. However, consider Galatians 1:23, *“But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.”* Paul relates the account of how the Jewish brethren in the past had heard that Paul was now preaching the faith to the Gentiles he once tried to destroy. This affirms that Paul indeed preached the same gospel or faith to the Gentiles the Jews had already received through the preaching of Peter and other Apostles!

In Ephesians 4:5, the Bible states, *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”* The one faith is the one *“true system of faith,”* having to do with doctrine (See Strongs #4102 Gk. N.T.) There cannot be two systems of faith when the Bible says there is one faith.

Now, I will finish this discussion with Galatians 3:26-29: *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

When the gospel of Jesus is preached, and faith develops in the heart of the hearer, once baptized into Christ, they belong to Christ. It does not matter whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The ground is level at the foot of the cross; all have equal access. Everyone alive today can belong to Christ, have salvation, if they will hear the gospel of the Great Commission of Christ, come to faith, turn from sins in repentance (Luke 13:3, 5), confess that belief (Acts 8:37) and put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:27). Gentiles today must respond to the gospel of Christ in the same manner as the Jews of today because there is one gospel that applies to all. ■

Unjust Criticism

By Bob Hines

Abraham Lincoln said: *“If I were to read, much less answer all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won’t amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, then angels swearing I was right would make no difference.”*

Others have suffered unjust criticism. Hannah moved her lips as she was praying silently, and the watching priest accused her of drunkenness. Ahab said Elijah was a troubler of Israel. Jesus was said of his enemies to have no regard for real religion or for the king.

So many Bible characters are said to have experienced unjust criticism. Have you? And what should you do when you’ve explained, yet the criticisms continue? Some of it may be vengeful “cheap shots” to keep you stirred up. What should you do?

“Honest Abe” may well be reminding us of the Bible answer – just keep going. There’s too much good to do to look back. It may be like Nehemiah told his enemies seeking compromise. He knew it was a trick and said, *“I am doing a good work and cannot come down.”* Frankly, there are some things we are just going to have to let the Lord sort out at the end, and He’ll do it right – don’t worry. Our business is to get on and keep on with life, doing the best we can. ■

FIRST

By Roger Shouse

The Bible tells us to *“seek first the kingdom of God”* (Matt. 6:33). There is so much more involved with this than just attendance. “Seeking first” is an attitude as well as a commitment to the cause of Christ. “Seeking first” means such things as:

- Putting others first (Phil. 2:3, 4)
- Being willing to give up things for the sake of others (1 Cor. 8:13)
- Being wronged rather than going to court with a brother (1 Cor. 6:7)
- Going the extra mile for another (Matt. 5:41)
- Doing without things so you won’t stumble (Matt. 5:30)

Is the kingdom important to you? Is it so important that you are willing to put it *FIRST* in your life? ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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