

## *“The Gospel in Galatians”*

### Lesson #3 The Unity of the Gospel

**Gal. 2:1–14, 1 Cor. 1:10–13, Gen. 17:1–21, John 8:31–36, Col. 3:11.**

**Philippians 2:2 (ESV)** *Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*

Protestant reformer John Calvin warned that Christians should avoid schism like the plague. But should unity be preserved at the cost of truth? Imagine if Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, had, in the name of unity, chosen to recant his views on salvation by faith alone when he was brought to trial at the Diet of Worms. “Had the Reformer yielded a single point, Satan and his hosts would have gained the victory. But his unwavering firmness was the means of emancipating the church, and beginning a new and better era.” GC 166.

#### The Importance of Unity And Truth

**Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NKJV)** *Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

**Ephesians 4:3 (ESV)** *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

**Colossians 3:15 (NKJV)** *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

**Ephesians 4:13 (NKJV)** *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

**\*1 Peter 1:22 (NKJV)** *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

**John 17:17–19 (NKJV)** *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>9</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*

**John 17:22–23 (NKJV)** *And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

Through the Holy Spirit, Christ will open more clearly to those who will believe on him that which he has inspired holy men to write concerning the truth. And it is thus that the unity for which Christ prayed is to be effected. We are to receive sanctification through obedience to the word and the Spirit of truth.

We cannot surrender the truth in order to accomplish this union; for the very means by which it is to be gained is sanctification through the truth. ... Men would effect a union through conformity to popular opinions, through a compromise with the world. But truth is God's basis for the unity of his people. {GW92 391

"We cannot purchase peace and unity by sacrificing the truth. The conflict may be long and painful, but at any cost we must hold fast to the Word of God" EGW (Historical Sketches 197).

**1 Corinthians 1:10–13 (NKJV)** *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup> Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

**Galatians 2:1–2 (NKJV)** *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. <sup>2</sup> And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.*

#### Circumcision and the False Brothers

**Galatians 2:3–5 (NKJV)** *Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), <sup>5</sup> to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

**Acts 10:45 (NKJV)** *And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.*

**Acts 15:1 (NKJV)** *And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

**\*Acts 15:5** (NKJV) *But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."*

**Acts 21:21** (NKJV) *but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.*

### What Is Circumcision?

Circumcision represented the holy seed would come through the descendents of Abraham. It symbolizes a cutting away of the flesh. Some have thought that circumcision was a barbaric tradition Abraham learned surrounding pagan nations. Modern science has in fact shown a number of health benefits. **(Read Medical Notes).**

### Heart Circumcision

**Deuteronomy 30:6** (NKJV) *And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*

**Deuteronomy 10:16** (NKJV) *Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*

**Jeremiah 4:3–4** (NKJV) <sup>3</sup> *For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. <sup>4</sup> Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings."*

**\*Acts 7:51** (NKJV) *"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*

**Romans 2:28–29** (NKJV) *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

**Galatians 5:2–6** (NKJV) *Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. <sup>3</sup> And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup> You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. <sup>5</sup> For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. <sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

### Circumcision Is Nothing

**1 Corinthians 7:19** (NKJV) *Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.*

**Galatians 5:2** (NKJV) *Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.*

**Galatians 5:6** (NKJV) *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

**Galatians 6:15** (NKJV) *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

**Exodus 12:43** (NKJV) *And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it.*

### Unity in Diversity

**Amos 3:3** (NKJV) *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*

**Galatians 2:4–5** (NKJV) *And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), <sup>5</sup> to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*

**Galatians 3:23–25** (NKJV) *But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

**\*John 8:31–32** (NKJV) *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

**John 8:34–36** (NKJV) *Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. <sup>36</sup> Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."*

**Romans 6:6–7** (NKJV) *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

**Romans 8:2** (NKJV) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

**1 Peter 2:16** (NKJV) *as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.*

## Confrontation in Antioch

**Galatians 2:11–13 (NKJV)** *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; <sup>12</sup> for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup> And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.*

**Acts 10:28 (NKJV)** *Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

"The brethren hoped that Paul, by following the course suggested, might give a decisive contradiction to the false reports concerning him. They assured him that the decision of the former council concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law, still held good. But the advice now given was not consistent with that decision. The Spirit of God did not prompt this instruction; it was the fruit of cowardice. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem knew that by non-conformity to the ceremonial law, Christians would bring upon themselves the hatred of the Jews and expose themselves to persecution." AA 404

## Paul's Concern

**Galatians 2:14–16 (NKJV)** *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? <sup>15</sup> We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, <sup>16</sup> knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

Christ prayed for his disciples "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The unity of believers is to be an evidence to the world of the divine power and mission of Christ. This should be the mighty argument to convince the world that Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of fallen man. The love existing between believers is to be similar to the love existing between the Father and the

Son. And this love in the soul is the evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are to love God supremely, and our neighbors as ourselves. It is in the lack of this love that thousands fail, and are found transgressors of the law. Supreme love for God will lead to love for our fellow-men, and the commandment of Christ is, "Love one another as I have loved you," "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." We cannot have this love unless Jesus is abiding in the heart by living faith. The very unity of disciples, the love manifested one for another, will be evidence to the world that God has sent his Son into the world as its Redeemer. This unity and love will exist wherever the Spirit of the Lord abides; heart will be bound to heart, and works of righteousness will appear in the daily life. {ST, April 13, 1891 par. 1 }

## Areas where there can and cannot be fellowship.

**Trinity?**

**Evolution?**

**Same-sex marriage?**

**Women's ordination?**

**Baptism by immersion?**

**Vegetarianism?**

**Foot washing?**

By Jessica Firger CBS News April 2, 2014,

Circumcision for male infants is becoming less common in the U.S., raising medical risks, according to new data published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings. The paper also finds that over their lifetime, half of all uncircumcised males will contract some form of medical condition related to their foreskin.

Their findings further back up a 2012 public statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics in support of widespread education initiatives and access to infant male circumcision.

"Infant circumcision should be regarded as equivalent to childhood vaccination," said Brian Morris, coauthor of the new report and professor emeritus in the School of Medical Sciences at the University of Sydney, in a press release. "As such, it would be unethical not to routinely offer parents circumcision for their baby boy. Delay puts the child's health at risk and will usually mean it will never happen."

Morris and his colleagues found the circumcision rate in newborns has declined from 83 percent in the 1960s to 77 percent in 2010.

The study says the benefits of newborn circumcision exceed the risks by at least 100 to 1.

Clinical research has found circumcision can safeguard an infant from a number of health complications, most notably urinary tract infections. Kidney damage develops in about half of infants who contract a UTI. The adult lifetime risk for a UTI is approximately 1 in 3 for uncircumcised men.

Additionally, circumcision has been found to lower one's risk for contracting HIV and HPV, the human papilloma virus, which can cause genital warts and has been linked to some cancers.

Another study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association reviewed more than 500 studies, finding that circumcision reduces risk for HIV transmission in heterosexual men by 60 percent, genital herpes by 30 percent, and cancer-causing strains of HPV by 35 percent.

Some research suggests that circumcision in infancy actually lowers the risk for prostate cancer in adulthood. A study of 3,400 men found those who were circumcised before their first sexual intercourse were 15 percent less likely to develop prostate cancer than men who were not.

Opponents of circumcision say removing the foreskin decreases sensitivity and limits sensation during sexual activity. Others say circumcision is a human rights issue, and that it's unethical for a family to make the decision for their child.

- **Certain types of cancer are almost unknown among males who have been circumcised. (*Science News*, March 11, 1989, page 150).**
- **The percentage of cervical cancer cases is much lower among women married to circumcised males.**
- **Urinary tract infection during the first year of life of uncircumcised boys is ten times that of their circumcised counterparts.**
- **After study of incidence of AIDS in Africa, researcher Jean L. Marx concluded that uncircumcised men may be five to eight times more likely to get AIDS during intimate relations. (*Science*, 470-471).**