

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS
"The Inconsistency of Legalism"
Galatians 2:11-14

Introduction

1. Paul's defense of his message was a high point in his contact with the Jerusalem brethren. It demonstrated the truth of his word to the Gentiles and his masterly ability to get on with the true brethren in the church of Christ.

2. But the truth never forges ahead without diabolical hinderances. Hence, a new threat to the truth came through one of the pillars of the church of our Lord--Peter the apostle.

3. The situation revealed the inconsistency of the Judaizers and their legalism. Note these inconsistencies:

1. Inconsistency of BELIEF. v. 11.

This came about after the events of the early verses of Galatians 2. Note the details:

a. Happened at Antioch.

The scene was now changed. Peter was in a strange situation, but in the midst of a thriving witness unto Christ.

b. Called forth resistance.

Paul found it necessary to be all things to all men, but there are times when one must stand for principle! It came here when Paul faced Peter mouth to mouth!

c. Registered a condemnation.

Using a perfect tense verb, Paul notes that Peter was condemned and actually stood in that position as Paul wrote!

2. Inconsistency of PRACTICE. v. 12.

Peter seemed to be the type of person who readily ran in the face of men he feared (cf. Matt. 26:69-75). Here he betrayed those whom he should have helped. He--

a. Fellowshipped with Gentiles.

The imperfect tense of the Greek notes that it was his customary action. Translate: he took meals with them!

- b. Separated from believers.

Both of these verbs--"withdrew and separated" are in the imperfect tense. Such irresolute-ness on the part of Peter! He invited division among the saints.

- c. Feared the Judaizers.

Previously, Peter had resisted the Judaizers; now he acquiesces and flees from them. Note: Prov. 29:25.

3. Inconsistency of TESTIMONY. v. 13.

It stands as a patent truth in the Word and in the world: no man lives unto himself. We are either a savour of death or life (2 Cor. 2:14-17).

- a. To an entire group.

Others there were who ate with and accepted the Jews. Now they too play the part with Peter!

- b. To a special person.

Known to those in Galatia, even Barnabas got caught in the flood of hypocrisy. How awful!

Conclusion

In view of the above, Paul was left with a decision. The final verse of the text marks out his course of action:

1. He stated the facts.
Peter, a Jew lived as a Gentile.
2. He posed a question?
Galatians, Gentiles live as Jews?
3. He held to the truth.
The truth of the Gospel.

NOTES