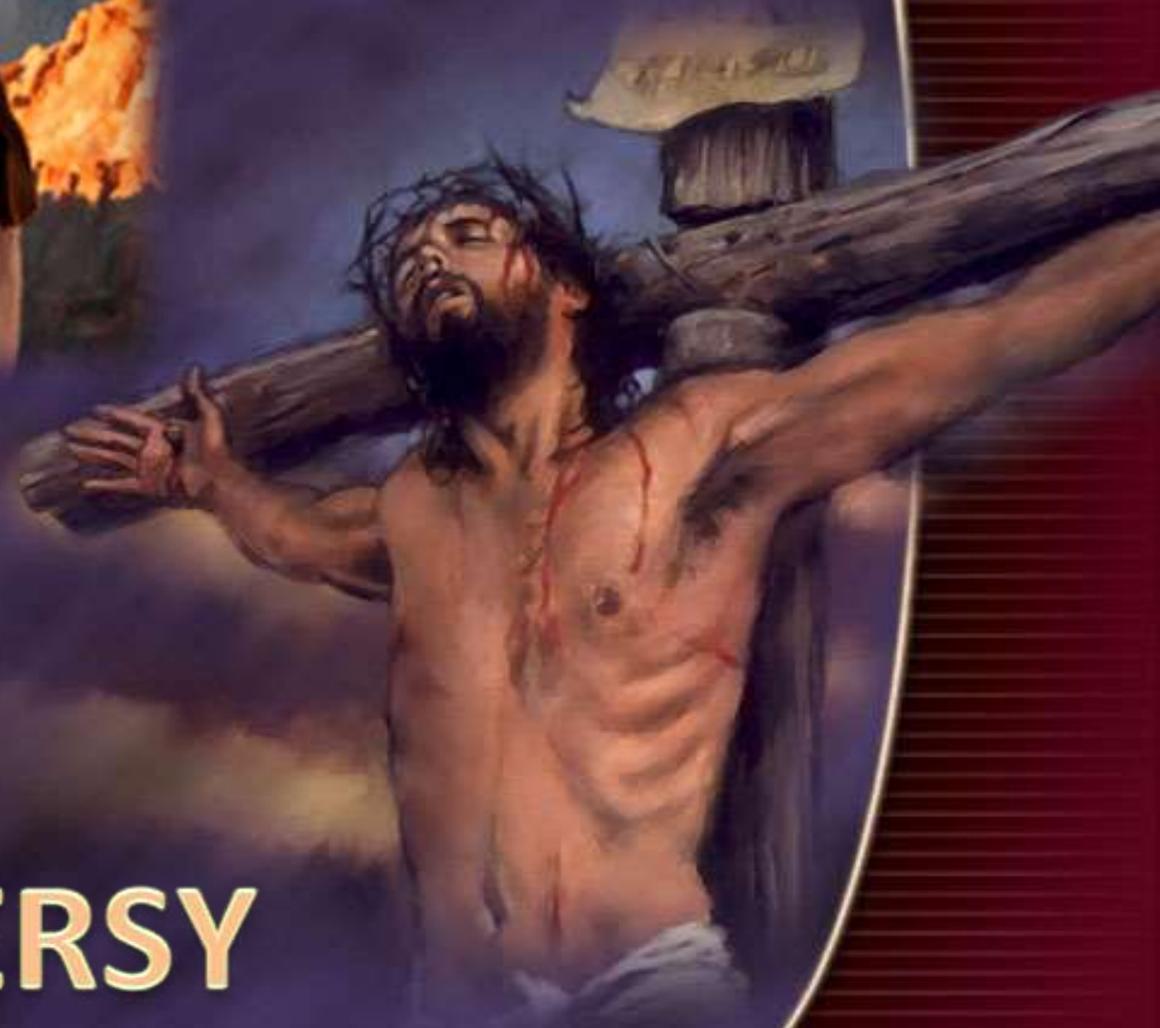


Lesson 2 for October 14, 2017



THE CONTROVERSY

CONFLICT OVER THE COVENANT

THE OLD COVENANT

Great promises: A better life in return for obedience.

“Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 18:5)

THE NEW COVENANT

Better promises: Salvation by faith only through Jesus' blood.

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!” (Romans 5:9)

The Old Covenant was expressed relative to blessings or curses conditional on whether the law was observed or not. It was like that because of the hardness of their hearts (Mark 10:5), but they received salvation only by their faith in the Lamb of God, who was going to die for them.

CONFLICT OVER THE LAW

Jewish Christians wanted the Gentile Christians to keep the Law given through Moses (and the pharisaic tradition).

God ordered different laws in the Old Testament:

Moral law

- For example: **The 10 commandments.**

Ceremonial law

- For example: **Animal sacrifices.**

Civil law

- For example: **Don't modify the boundaries of fields.**

Health law

- For example: **Quarantine.**

Various laws

- For example: **Leaving the leftovers on the fields for the poor.**

Which of those laws must we observe as believers? Why?

CONFLICT OVER SALVATION

The Pharisees thought that salvation could not be gained without strictly observing the law.

“Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: ‘Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.’” (Acts 15:1)

In Romans, Paul wanted to make clear that salvation is a free gift of God to those who believe in Jesus’ expiatory sacrifice.

Paul taught that we cannot be saved by observing the Ten Commandments, but we must observe them as an eternal moral law.





RESOLVING CONFLICTS



The conflict over observing the Jewish law and tradition could have destroyed the church, but thanks to the Holy Spirit it was resolved in a wonderful way.

- A.** The Pharisees explained their point of view about how the Gentile should observe the Old Testament laws.
- B.** Paul and Barnabas –supported by Peter– reported on the conversion of Gentiles to the Gospel and defended that they shouldn't impose Jewish burdens to them.
- C.** There was some discussion in the assembly and they reached a conclusion that benefited everybody.

Although Jewish believers weren't to impose their rules and traditions on Gentiles, the council wanted to make sure that the Gentiles didn't do things that would have been deemed offensive to the Jews who were united with them in Jesus.

“The council which decided this case was composed of apostles and teachers who had been prominent in raising up the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches, with chosen delegates from various places. Elders from Jerusalem and deputies from Antioch were present, and the most influential churches were represented. The council moved in accordance with the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will.



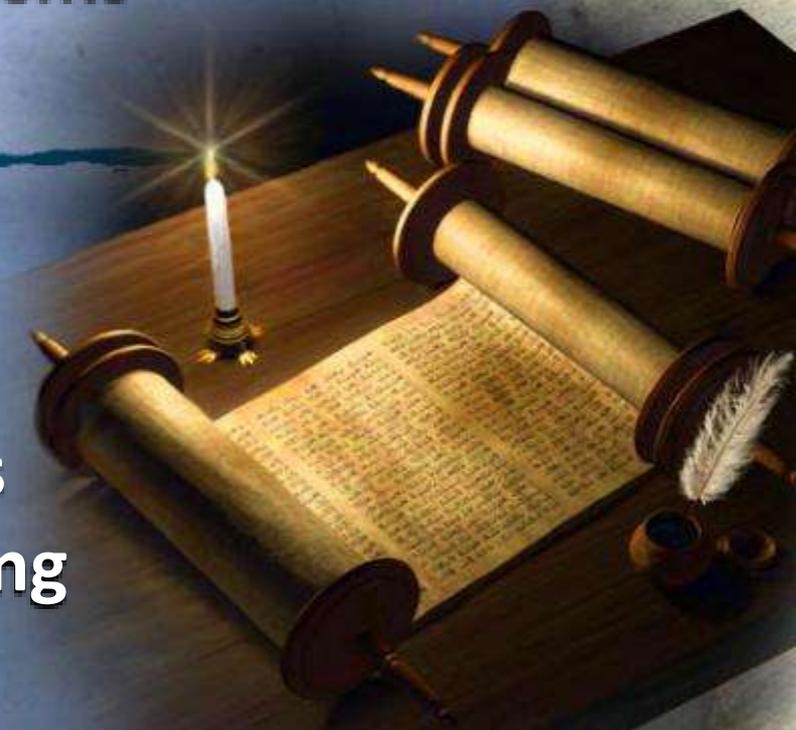
As a result of their deliberations they all saw that God Himself had answered the question at issue by bestowing upon the Gentiles the Holy Ghost; and they realized that it was their part to follow the guidance of the Spirit.”

E.G.W. (The Acts of the Apostles, cp. 19, p. 196)

AVOIDING COMING CONFLICTS

Despite the conclusion of the assembly of Jerusalem, some teachers kept insisting and creating great problems in some churches.

Paul fought those movements in the epistles to Galatians and Romans, teaching them to withstand those errors.





Let's seek the Holy Spirit's inspiration, so He can help us avoid imposing personal opinions that are not basic to our salvation. Only through Him can we stand firm and be sure of the basic biblical teachings.