

Galatians 2

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Review of Galatians 1

- This is Paul's third letter, written to the 4 churches in Galatia, from Ephesus while on his 3rd Missionary Journey (54-57)
- It was in response to the challenge to Paul's apostleship and authority from the Judaizers
- Paul undercuts the Judaizer's argument by stating that he received his apostleship and was sent directly from Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles
- He questions the faith of the Galatians and informs them that was only one Gospel (which he had preached to them) and anyone who taught another must be condemned (Anathema)

Review of Galatians 1 (Cont)

- Paul claimed that he received his apostleship, just as Peter and James had directly from Jesus
- Much of Paul's zeal can be seen as a reflection of the Prophet Jeremiah
- At this point Paul fills in many of the details of his conversion that were not presented in Acts, including his 3 years of meditation in the desert before returning to Damascus, and then on to Jerusalem followed by his early travels with Barnabas

Galatians

- **Gal 2:1-2** *“Then after **14 years** I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preached among the Gentiles,”*
 - This is the trip discussed in **Acts 15:2** when Paul and companions went up to Jerusalem to refute the Judaizers who had caused the problem in the Church in *Antioch*
 - Here he is relating to the *Galatians* that before he went to Jerusalem to meet with the leaders of the Church he had been baptizing Greeks without circumcising or requiring them to practice Kosher for many years

Galatians (Cont)

- He was telling them that he, along with *Barnabas* and *Titus*, went privately to *Jerusalem* based on a revelation to lay before the key Apostles (Peter, James and John) his understanding of his call to preach the gospel to the Gentiles
 - It is in **Acts 15:4** that we were introduced to the concept of *Presbuteros* (the clergy or elders)
 - It was also this issue that ultimately led to the decision for, and resolutions of, the **Council of Jerusalem** (50 A.D.) which impacted so heavily on the Christians in Asia- Minor

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:2** *“Lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain.”*
 - Paul was saying in all humility that:
 - Although he had received this revelation from Jesus Christ, it was possible, since so many people were saying he was wrong, that it may not have been a divine call
 - Thus, he needed to go to Jerusalem to check out his calling and to get a second opinion on what he should do from the leaders of the Church

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:3** *“But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised,”*
 - Although this is seemingly an unrelated fact, we must remember that it has everything to do with the core of this letter
 - If we do not read ***Galatians*** or ***Romans*** understanding the historical context presented in the Book of Acts, we might misunderstand the real issues in these letters

Galatians (Cont)

- After all, even Peter says that “There are some of the things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction” (**2nd Pet 3:15-16**)
- People get mixed up because they do not know the story
- We should highlight the word “circumcision” within this letter to understand the significance of this issue

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:3-5** *“though he was a Greek. But because of **false brethren** secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage - to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.”*
 - Titus was an uncircumcised Greek
 - There were false Christians with a false gospel who wanted to bring them into bondage (force them back under the Law)
 - “you” here is a reference to the members of the Galatian Church
- It was to these churches that Paul delivered the written council document

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:6** *“and from those who were reputed to be something what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality*
 - Paul is referencing the apostles, Peter, James, John and any other member of the clergy who was present
 - He was not being disrespectful by saying that he did not care what Peter had to say
 - Obviously, he cared about their opinions or he would not have gone to Jerusalem to talk with them

Galatians (Cont)

- Instead he was taking the argument right out from under the feet of the *Judaizers* in Galatia who were claiming that they spoke with the authority of the Apostles in Jerusalem
- Paul went to Jerusalem out of respect to check things out to make sure he was right
- After all, it was Peter who said: “I perceive that God shows no partiality” (**Acts 10:34**)

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:6** “- *knows, I say, who were of repute added nothing to me.*”
 - Paul is saying that he was preaching the same gospel to the Gentiles that Peter and the other Apostles were preaching to the Jews
 - The only difference for the Gentiles was that they did not have to be circumcised or live under the Koshers laws, but only keep the four restrictions from the “Holiness Code” in Leviticus

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:7-8** “but on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the **uncircumcised**, *just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the **circumcised** for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised work through me also for the Gentiles,*”
 - It appears that after the controversy over Peter’s conversion of Cornelius, Peter seems to have stayed away from speaking to Gentiles
 - He really did not want to go to Caesarea in the first place

Galatians (Cont)

- He pointed out to Cornelius how sinful it was for him to enter his house which was filled with many unclean and uncircumcised Gentiles
- Remember all the trouble he got into with the circumcision party (**Acts 11**)
- So basically Paul has taken on the mission to the Gentiles while Peter and the rest are primarily dealing with the Jews in Jerusalem

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:9** *“And when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John,”*
 - James was the Bishop of Jerusalem
 - James the son of Zebedee and brother of John had been put to death by Herod Agrippa (**Acts 9**)
 - Remember this is not the “dream team” mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels (Peter, James and John)

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:9-10** *“Who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the **right-hand of fellowship**, that we should go to the **Gentiles** and they to the **circumcised**; only they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do.”*
 - This confirms the respective missions and provided the authority for Paul’s mission
 - The “poor” referred to the Christians in the Churches in Judea who took the vow to live in common and were in dire straits due to the widespread famine*

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:11** “*But when Cephas came to Antioch*”
 - The Acts of the Apostles gives us only a synopsis of Paul’s journeys
 - We must go to Paul’s letters for many of the additional details concerning time spent and places visited
 - So here in his letter to the *Galatians* we find out what happened in *Antioch* after the Council (**Acts 15**)
 - Paul, Barnabas, Silas and others went to Antioch from which Paul eventually left on his Second Missionary Journey
 - It would appear that Paul spent some time in Antioch before departing
 - It was during this time we find this little episode with Peter

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:11** *“But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.”*
 - Paul opposed Peter to his face because what Peter was doing was wrong (*Kataginosko* - Greek for “being against knowledge”, “being wrong”)
 - The English here “stood condemned” is a bit strong
 - This is Greek courtroom language showing that Peter was “in the wrong”

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:12** “*For before certain men came from James,*”
 - This does not mean that James sent them
 - It means that they came from the Church of James in Jerusalem
 - So what happened is that Peter and Paul were in *Antioch* after the Council exhorting the church to live in accordance with the Council until a group of Christians from the Church in Jerusalem arrived

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:12** *“For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.”*
 - Here are our friends from the “circumcision party!”
 - What is happening here?
 - Peter is eating dinner with Gentile Christians
 - Could be the Eucharist, the Agape Meal or just dinner
 - They celebrated the Agape meal before or after the Eucharist celebration because that was what they understood Jesus had done

Galatians (Cont)

- We will see problems over eating arising with this in 1st Corinthians 11
- In some instances it seems as though people became glutton with food and drink
- So here Peter was eating a meal with the Gentile Christians until these men from Jerusalem showed up and then he removed himself from the Gentiles fearing the reaction of the members of the “Circumcision Party”

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:13** *“And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity.”*
 - Remember the earlier tension between Paul and Barnabas and these *Judaizers* over this issue in **Acts 15:2**
 - That according to the Law a Jew could not eat a meal with an uncircumcised, unclean Gentile
 - Peter, in **Acts 10**, asked “why did you call me”, you know that he could not come to Cornelius’ house as it violated the Law

Galatians (Cont)

- The Circumcision Party came and asked Peter why he went to the house of Cornelius
- So here we are with Peter and Paul enjoying a dinner with Gentile Christians
- All of a sudden Peter welcomed and moved to eat with some guys known to Peter from Jerusalem
- Paul goes ballistic – why?
- Think of what this said to the Antioch Christians!
 - Peter is acting as though God is partial to the Jewish Christians
 - It makes it seem as though there is a distinction within the Church

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:14** *“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?’”*
 - Paul is ticked off for they had just dealt with this whole thing at the Council
 - After all, Peter himself had said this very same thing at the Council and now he is acting in this manner?

Galatians (Cont)

- But Paul knows that Peter was not happy about imposing the Kosher thing on the Gentiles
- At the Council Peter even asked how could they (Jews) lay the burden of the Law on these converts
- He pointed out how hard it was for the Jews to live by the Law
- Paul points out to Peter that he was not keeping Kosher when he ate with the Christians from *Antioch*
- But as soon as these guys (Judaizers) show up from Jerusalem he acts as though he was keeping Kosher
- Paul chastises Peter saying that one moment he was living like a Gentile and not trying to compel them to live like the Jews and then in the next moment he changed his public stance*

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:15 – 16** *“We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by **works of the law** but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith in Christ**, and not by works of the law, (Torah) because by works of the law shall no one be justified.*
 - Again, Paul is talking about circumcision and Kosher
 - That was what Peter said at the council (**Acts 15:7-11**)
 - Paul was quoting back to Peter what he had said earlier and is asking him if he remembers
 - Paul is also saying that even the Jewish Christians who had kept circumcision and Kosher believed in Jesus
 - Obviously, **if** the works of the Law (Torah) **could justify** a person then there was no need for Jesus' coming!

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:17-19** *“But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God.*
 - Paul was saying that if they did not make it, it was not because of Jesus as it is not his fault
 - To fully understand what Paul is saying about one dying to the Law (Torah) we must read all of Paul’s letters

Galatians (Cont)

- Paul had catechized these people for years
- Here we are only getting a small portion of his teaching because Paul knew that these people already knew his catechesis
- Thus, we must read Paul's epistles thoroughly
- We can't just read a little bit here or there or we are not going to understand its meaning
- This letter was written to a specific group of Christians who were converted and baptized by Paul over the years and by this time they had been thoroughly catechized

Galatians (Cont)

- This is why Paul did not explain everything in detail with them again
- In this instance he was addressing the circumcision and Kosher issue
- His underlying premise is that one had died to the Law through Christ and his cross and baptism
- We will hear more about this in **Roman 6 and 7**

Galatians (Cont)

- **Gal 2:20-21** *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification work through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.”*
 - This is Paul’s baptismal theology which we will again review in **Romans**
 - The issue here, as found in **Acts 15**, is the fact that circumcision and obeying the Kosher laws are not a requirement for “being saved”
 - Paul’s arguments will be continued in **Galatians 3**