

## Notes on Galatians 2

**Intro:** Chapter two continues the first part of Paul's appeal to the Galatians. It is the argument from Paul's own experience—the historical argument. In chapter one Paul shows by his experience that his message was not received from men but by revelation of Jesus Christ. In this chapter he shows that because it came by revelation and not from men, it was the truth and acknowledged to be such by the Jewish Jerusalem church.

Paul recounts another trip to Jerusalem, which demonstrates that the content of his message was true (2:1-10).

*I went up again to Jerusalem—Is this the journey of Ac. 11:27-30 to Judea that ends in Jerusalem or the journey to Jerusalem mentioned in Ac. 15:3-4? It appears the evidence favors the Jerusalem visit of Ac. 15, though the position that it is the visit of Ac. 11 is certainly defensible.*

After fourteen years—Is this to be construed from conversion or the last visit of 1:18? Hebraistically a period of fourteen years may be a little as twelve whole years. It appears this interval is to be construed from Paul's first appearance in Jerusalem three years after his conversion. Thus, this episode seems to take place 17 years after Paul's conversion. What is particularly apparent is how Paul had for years now been preaching the gospel with virtually no contact with the apostles. If this is a reference to the Jerusalem meeting Paul had spent time preaching in Damascus, a brief period in Jerusalem, the area of Cilicia and Syria, Antioch, completed the first preaching tour of Galatia and returned to Antioch from that effort.

With Barnabas—"in company with", Barnabas, Paul's chief associate at this time. The Galatians also knew him from his participation with Paul in evangelizing the Galatians.

Titus—A Gentile who would serve as the test case of Paul's work. He was evidently a Christian, but one who had not been circumcised according to the Law. Cf. Ac. 15:2 "with certain others".

It was because of a revelation—Some might construe this with Agabus' prophecy of Ac. 11; but it is certainly clear that God would have revealed to Paul in some way what his conduct should be in such a controversial situation as had developed in Ac. 15:1-2. Cf. Ac. 15:2 "the brethren determined.."; but" (Greek "de") Paul would not go without the Lord's own approval. Paul did not need the approval of the Jerusalem church; but perhaps he would be helpful in resolving the problem.

It was because of false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty—Note the parallelism between this statement and the one in v. 4. Paul shows that the trip to Jerusalem was not only because of a revelation but because some had "sneaked in". This seems to suggest the episode of Ac. 15 in which certain Jewish believers professedly with permission of the Jerusalem church (cf. 15:24) sought to bring the

Gentile into bondage by urging them to be circumcised and keep the Law. Perhaps they waited until they had conclusive evidence that some of the Gentiles were uncircumcised before they raised their teaching (Ac. 15:1-2).

***I laid before them the gospel which I preached among the Gentiles.***

Obviously Paul and Barnabas presented their message to the church in total (Ac. 15:4). It was a matter of great wisdom to prepare the way for this report to the whole church by allowing Paul and Barnabas to lay before “those who were of reputation” and “in private” what they had been teaching and its results (Cf. a similar incident in Ac. 21:18). Consequently, there would be a full understanding and unity before the matter was aired before the whole congregation. Moreover, such a meeting would remove any question as to whether it is the gospel which “I am preaching..”. The reaction of the Jerusalem church did nothing to hinder but to encourage Paul to continue preaching his message.

***Those who heard Paul gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship and did not compel Titus to be circumcised.***

First, Titus, was not compelled to be circumcised (v. 3-5)

And this though Titus was a Greek.

The Judaizers spied out the liberty of those uncircumcised and sought by insisting upon circumcision to “bring them into bondage” (Cf. 5:1)

We did not yield in subjection to them for one hour that the truth might remain with you. This phrase seems to imply that the Galatians had already been evangelized. To yield to the pressure of the Judaizers would have resulted in nullifying the gospel Paul had preached among the Galatians.

Second, those of reputation contributed nothing to Paul but instead gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (v. 6-10)

Those of reputation contributed nothing to Paul’s message, v. 6. It needed no alteration as originally delivered to the Galatians.

They acknowledged that Paul had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised and acknowledge the grace given to Paul. Thus, they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that they might go to the circumcised while Peter and John went to the circumcised.

They only asked that we remember the poor. Interestingly, Paul would respond with the great collection on his third journey to meet the needs of the Jerusalem saints.

***What this whole episode made clear was that Paul’s message was true and was acknowledged as true in the presence of those very Judaizers who insisted that the Law must be kept and Gentiles must be circumcised. Paul reminds the Galatians of these things in brief because the decrees were in***

*fact already delivered to them (Ac. 16:4). This is, in part, the grounds for Paul's wonder that the Galatians are now deserting God for another gospel.*

**Paul reports an incident in which he corrected Peter himself for his inconsistency with the truth of the gospel (2:11-21)**

*If the Judaizers were to deny the apostleship of Paul, they could not deny that of Peter. Yet, in one case Peter accepted Paul's correction in his application of the gospel at Antioch (v. 11).*

I opposed him to his face—This suggests not only Paul's boldness but equality in correcting Peter.

Because he stood condemned—Peter's condemnation consisted in hypocrisy in apply the truth which he himself had acknowledged.

**Before Jewish brethren came "from James" he ate with Gentiles.**

**When they arrived he "withdrew and held himself aloof".**

**The rest of the Jews were also influenced to imitate the behavior, even Barnabas.**

**When Paul saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, he challenged Peter "before all".**

**Paul made four distinct arguments that reveal the consequences of Peter's choice to keep the Law and refuse association with Gentiles.**

Argument #1—(v. 14) Why do you want to make others do what you don't do yourself?

*You, Peter, were a Jew who kept the Law (particularly observing its food laws); but when you became a Christian you started living like the Gentiles (you did not make a difference between clean and unclean food.) How come you are now acting like the Gentiles are wrong to live like you have been living? If you were right to live like a Gentile, why are they wrong to live the same way? How come you are trying to make them be what you quit being? How come you are tiring to make them live like Jews?*

Argument #2—(v. 15-16) If we as Jews by nature could not be saved by the Law, why would we want to bind it on those who were never under its teachings.

*You and I are Jews by birth and teaching (we knew enough of the Law to obey it in part); but these Gentiles have never been anything but unbelieving sinners, disobedient to God. But you and I recognized, even though we had been obedient Jews that our obedience is not sufficient to make us righteous before God.*

*(How much more the sinning Gentiles!!) We came to believe that Christ died for our sins in order to save us; and that following the Law would not save us. We left the Law for Christ because we realize that no one could be saved by keeping the Law in perfect obedience.*

Argument #3—(v. 17-18) By trying to make Gentiles keep the law, we actually make Christ a minister of sin.

*But if we now seek to be justified by Christ, and yet live by the Law and are found to be sinners, then we make Christ a minister of sin. For if I rebuild what I once destroyed, then I am a sinner myself. In other words, if through the gospel we encourage people to do what makes them sinners, are we not making Christ a minister of sin?*

Argument #4—(v. 19-21) Through the Law we came to see that we needed Christ and that without him there is no hope of righteousness.

*The Law made me see I was spiritually dead and that I needed Christ. I died to it, so that I might live to God. I crucified with Christ the old man I was so that I could let Christ live in me. I live now by faith in Christ who loved me and gave himself up for me. God's grace made that possible. To seek to be saved by keeping the Law is to nullify God's grace and make Christ's death in vain.*

***What this episode makes clear is that Paul's message was the truth and was acknowledged as such by Peter himself.***

**Conclusion: If chapter one stresses the source of the gospel, then this chapter emphasizes the content. Because Paul's message came by revelation it was the truth. Consequently, the Galatians should stand in the message delivered to them by Paul.**