

**GAL. 1:18-2:14, PAUL AND THE JERUSALEM APOSTLES**

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**A. 1:13-2:14, Overview**

The objective here is to establish his independence of and parity with the Jerusalem church, by relating a series of historical incidents. Does 1:20 mark a break in his argument: independence of Jerusalem before this, parity with after?

1. Independence of his gospel from Jerusalem
  - a) 1:13-14, His life before salvation.
  - b) 1:15-17, His salvation, away from Jerusalem.
  - c) 1:18-19, Acts 9, in Jerusalem.
2. 1:20, the Oath, is not talking about his life as the context is, but discusses this writing itself. This popping up to a metalevel is characteristic of breaks or dividing points.
3. Parity with Jerusalem
  - a) 1:21-24, Acts 10, away from Jerusalem.
  - b) 2:1-10, Acts 11 or 15? In Jerusalem.
  - c) 2:11-14, Peter in Antioch, away from Jerusalem.

**B. 1:18-19, First contact with apostles**

Cf. Acts 9:19-30.

1. Time: "After three years." Adequate time for him to develop his own understanding of the gospel. Acts 9:20-23 shows that during this time he was active in Damascus for "many days" in preaching.
2. Visited Peter for two weeks.
3. Also met James (cf. Acts 9:27, "apostles").
4. The oath in v.20 emphasizes that this is his only contact with Jerusalem: After three years of independent thinking and ministry, only for two weeks, only with Peter and James.

**C. 1:20, The Oath**

1. Language can talk either about events, or about itself. When it talks about itself, we call it "metalanguage."
2. Here Paul momentarily shifts to metalanguage, then back to talking about events in his life.
3. May mark a seam or break in the argument: up to this point he has been emphasizing the independence of his authority from Jerusalem. Now he is discussing his parity with them in ministry.
4. Diagram:
  - a) Words about words            1:20
  - b) Words about events        Gal. 1,2
  - c) Historical events        Paul's life

**D. 1:21-24, Ministry in Cilicia and Syria**

1. The events, Acts 9:30 (Cilicia); 11:25,26 (Syria).
2. Points of note:
  - a) "He now preaches the faith." He was active in ministry during this time, and this was known throughout Judaea.
  - b) Unknown to Judaeian churches. That is, this was not a missionary journey sponsored by them, but an independent exercise of his apostolic mission. (He could never have said this about Antioch with respect to his later missionary work.)
  - c) "They glorified God in me," Cf. Isa. 49:1-3 (note also parallel between 49:1 and 1:15). Far from criticizing Paul's independence, they continually (imperfect) recognized Paul as God's instrument for his own glory.

**E. 2:1-10, The Mystery Visit**

1. Identity with Acts: either 11:30 or ch.15. Both have problems. I prefer 11:30, but it doesn't affect the main flow of the argument.
2. Basic structure: 3-5 is a digression.
  - a) The main backbone of the paragraph is to show Paul's recognition by the Jerusalem apostles.
    - 1) My trip to Jerusalem.
    - 2) They added nothing to me.
    - 3) We agreed:
      - a> to partition the work;
      - b> to care for the poor
  - b) Digression about Titus the Greek
    - 1) v.3, the response in Jerusalem
    - 2) 4-5, another occasion (in Antioch?)
3. Jerusalem visit
  - a) The party: Paul, Barnabas, and Titus.
  - b) The time: 14 years after (the previous visit? his conversion?)
  - c) The motivation: a divine revelation (Acts 11:27,28, Agabus?)
  - d) The purpose: to review his gospel with Peter, James, and John.
    - 1) Privately; contrast the public meeting in Acts 15, and note

the need to keep such discussions as small as possible.

2) "Running in vain:"

a> No suggestion that he needed their endorsement for his message to be effective. That would be counter to his entire point thus far.

b> But he values the unity of the church, and wants to work in harmony and cooperation with the others. Though his authority is *independent* of them, he does not want to work in *isolation* from them. A lesson here for us: need to develop closer ties with other groups! God has not called us to evangelize the world all by ourselves.

4. What they didn't do, 6.

a) Structure: anacolouthon. Starts to say, "from them I received nothing," then ends, "they gave me nothing." Neither in the content of his gospel nor in his authority did they have anything to add to him. Shows how weak the Judaizers are in seeking to add now to his gospel.

b) Note how he describes the Jerusalem leaders:

1) Their appearance: not ironic or sarcastic, but emphasizes their visible position, their reputation.

a> 2:2, "to them which were of reputation," literally, "the seemers."

b> 2:6, "these who seemed to be something"

c> 2:9, "who seemed to be pillars."

2) His assessment, v.6. Paul rises above their reputation. This does not matter to God, thus also not with him. The answer to objections that "great men of God differ." We need to recognize that human authority counts for nothing; it is only adherence to God's word that matters.

5. The Agreement:

a) Division of labor: Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles, the Jerusalem apostles to the Jews. Note the reasons that impelled the Jerusalem pillars to suggest this:

1) 7,8. They "beheld" the relative effectiveness of Peter and Paul with the two groups.

2) 9. They "knew" the grace that was given to Paul. Eph. 3:8, to preach Christ among the Gentiles.

Note that empirical evidence alone is not enough; there needs to be an assurance of God's work.

b) 10. Care for the poor, which Paul had already shown readiness for, perhaps on this very trip. Reflected in Paul's continual ministry toward the Jerusalem saints. Rom. 15:26,27.

6. The Digression about Titus, 3-5

Notice external inclusio in *hoi dokousoi* in 2 and 6.

- a) 3. In Jerusalem, the apostles said nothing about circumcising Titus. It strikes Paul that this is a fact to record, since it is very relevant to the question of whether gentiles must become Jews. But it is a digression, since this section is about Paul's credentials, not the content of the gospel.
- b) 4-5. Not a complete sentence: we must complete it. Probably something like "[The question of Titus only came up] because of false brethren..."
  - 1) These brethren are not in Jerusalem, but were "smuggled into" the gentile church, probably in Antioch, to "spy out" the teaching there. Thus this is not discussing the business at the Jerusalem conference, *pace* Hendriksen.
  - 2) Already then Paul stood firmly against them; foreshadows what will emerge later in this epistle.

**F. 2:11-14, With Peter in Antioch**

Paul establishes his parity with Peter by relating an episode when he stood against Peter, rebuking him for sin.

1. 2:11-13, the *Occasion*

- a) Jewish custom forbade a Jew to eat with Gentiles: Acts 10:28; 11:3. Based largely on the dietary laws, which Gentiles could not be expected to follow. Cf. Daniel and his friends.
- b) Peter had learned in the case of Cornelius that this custom is wrong, so when he visits Antioch, he eats with the Gentiles.
- c) Then some Jewish believers from Jerusalem came to visit, and in deference to the Jewish custom, he now separates himself at mealtime.
  - 1) What happened to the courage he showed in Acts 11? There, he was defending his actions after the fact. Here, the Jews are there watching to see what he will do.
  - 2) Was he justifying his actions by a "weaker brother" rule toward the Jerusalem Jews? After all, in Rom. 14, Paul himself argues that we should follow the dietary laws if that will avoid offense. That rule fails here because it discriminates against the Gentile brethren! Can't avoid offense!
- d) Other Jews in Antioch, including even Barnabas, followed Peter's lead.

2. The *Analysis* of the error: "they walked not uprightly

according to the truth of the gospel." Contrast "walk uprightly [straight toward]" with "withdraw" in v.12. Paul sees this action as contrary to the implications of the gospel:

- a) Emphasis on human works for acceptance with God;
- b) Denies equal standing of Jew and Gentile before God, both in sin and in salvation.

3. 2:14ff, the *Rebuke*

- a) Its scope: "before them all." Contrast Matt. 18:15-17.  
Reasons:
  - 1) The offense is not private, but public. Not Peter sinning against Paul, but against the entire church.
  - 2) 1 Tim. 5:20, public rebuke is appropriate for those who are in positions of leadership, precisely because of the public nature of their sin.
  - 3) Even Matt. 18 allows for public rebuke, if private rebuke fails.
  - 4) Contrast 2:2. Private consultation ahead of time may eliminate the need for public rebuke later, but sometimes both are needed.
- b) Its content: If Peter is willing to drop Jewish customs while he is visiting Antioch, what grounds does he have for insisting that the Gentiles observe them? By his own action, he has shown that they are obsolete.

G. **2:14-21, The Transition**

At first glance, it is not at all clear where Paul's words to Peter stop and his address to the Galatians begins.

- 1. Observe the shift in pronouns. 2:14 is clearly to Peter, while 3:1 is clearly to the Galatians.
  - a) 2:14, thou (Peter).
  - b) 2:15-17, we.
  - c) 2:18-21, I.
  - d) 3:1, you (Galatians).
- 2. The structure of 2:15-21 anticipates the structure of chapters 3-5, suggesting that this material has been specially composed for this letter, though the subject matter may well be drawn from Paul's recollection of his discussion with Peter in Antioch. Note two contrasts: factual statements vs. contrafactual conditionals; and salvation vs. sanctification:

	Salvation	Sanctification
Factual	15-16	18-20
Contrafactual	17	21

|  
v  
We  
3:2  
3:5-4:11

|  
v  
I His thots of their condition  
3:3  
4:12-5:1

The salvation/sanctification contrast persists through chs.  
3-4.