

III- Defense of the Pure Gospel Galatians 2:1-21

Galatians 2:1-21 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. 11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Exposition of Text:

This session brings us to the Defense of the Pure Gospel. The key verse in this section is Galatians 2:5, "That the truth of the gospel might continue with you." There is a natural division in this chapter. Galatians 2:1-10 deals with Paul's defense of the Gospel in Jerusalem before the church leaders. Galatians 2:11-21 deals with the defense of the gospel by Paul when he confronted Peter. I will offer the following outline for your consideration.

Outline: Defense of the Pure Gospel Galatians 2:1-21

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 - 2- Paul Rebukes Peter Galatians 2:14-21**
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 - b- Justified by faith and not by works. Galatians 2:16-21**

A- Defense Before the Church Leaders Galatians 2:1-10

There is much debate among scholars about when the events took place in Galatians 2:1-10 . Some scholars see these events as the events occurring in Act_11:30 during what is known as the famine visit. Others see the time of the visit here as the events recorded in Acts 15 known as the Jerusalem Council. I hold personally to the second view because of a couple of reasons. 1- In Galatians 2:10 the only thing that the Apostles ask that Paul do is remember the poor. It seems unlikely to me that they would have included this if he had just brought a gift to the poor. 2- I feel that the content of the rebuke of Peter included events that were settled at the Jerusalem Council. "The identification of Galatians 2 with Acts 15 has its strength in the fact that the subject of discussion is the same in both cases and in the fact that Peter and James, as well as Paul and Barnabas, are given prominence n both passages." 17

The debate does not have to be settled, nor will it be, to rightly understand this section however. Neither is it completely necessary to be able to completely reconcile Acts 15 and Galatians 2 because it does not affect the message of the gospel and only shows the united work.

The first thing we notice in verse one is that Paul visited Jerusalem 14 years after his first visit some three years after he was saved. Paul had been busy preaching the Gospel in the northern regions. He takes along Barnabas and Titus at this time.

1- Private Defense Galatians 2:2

Paul says he goes up, "by revelation" from God to Jerusalem. He went because God told him to go and not because he was summoned to defend his position by the Jerusalem apostles. He was not "called on the rug" by a higher church authority.

He says that he first met privately with, "them which were of reputation..." He meet with the leaders in private to present his preaching and defend the gospel. Paul did this according to Galatians 2:4 to prevent the spies from hearing and understanding the defense that would be offered by these men during the council to follow. These men Paul met with are not to be seen in any way as standing against the Gospel that Paul preached. They will in fact help to defend this gospel a short time later. (See Acts 15)

2- Titus, Trophy of Grace to Gentiles Galatians 2:3

Titus was probably converted through the ministry of Paul. (See Tit_1:4 .) Titus is with Paul, I submit, to be presented as exhibit A in the Gospel defense. "He was to be a test case in the matter of Gentile reception into the Church." 18 He was a Gentile who had been converted and was not circumcised. "Would the Jerusalem apostles force the rite of circumcision on a Gentile believer? Paul knew that both Jews and Gentiles are accepted by God through faith in Jesus Christ without any distinction and that the church should do the same." 19

3- Defended Against False brethren Galatians 2:4-5

These "false brethren", we know them as the Judaizers, wanted circumcision to be a part of the gospel necessary for conversion. Paul said that the Jerusalem church did not see this as necessary. "Paul's resistance to these Judaizers was not dictated by stubbornness nor by a sense of superiority. He saw that the circumcision issue involved the truth of the gospel." 20

These men had hostile intent in that they wished to destroy the gospel that Paul had preached for a decade and a half. He did not give them consideration "place" for a minute. Thanks to Paul the gospel remained pure.

4- Paul's Gospel Accepted as Equal and Complete Galatians 2:6-9

Paul says that the Jerusalem brethren, "added nothing to me." He knew as he went to Jerusalem his gospel was complete and did not need any additions.

a- Peter, Apostle to the Jews Galatians 2:6

These men recognized the working of God in that Peter was the Apostle that God had set aside to preach to the Jews. He was lead by the Holy Spirit in this work.

b- Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles Galatians 2:7

The same Holy Spirit that set Peter aside to the Jews had set Paul aside to the Gentiles. They realized that the work of God was multifaceted.

5- Remember the Poor- Galatians 2:10

The only thing that they ask of Paul was that he remember the poor. Paul said, "the very thing I was eager to do." NIV (see 1Co_16:1-4)

One author gave the following suggestions concerning the meetings in Jerusalem.

"Some have suggested that there were four different meetings involved: (1) a public meeting, at which Paul recounted what God had done among the Gentiles, Act_15:4 ; (2) Paul's private meeting with the leaders, Galatians 2:2 ; (3) the public debate of Act_15:5 and Galatians 2:3-5 ; and (4) the council session at which the matter was finally settled, Act_15:6 ff." 21

B- Defense Before Peter Face to Face Galatians 2:11-21

1- Peter in Antioch. Galatians 2:11-13 ;

a- Peter's right practice. Galatians 2:12 a

I remind us that the Jews did not have contact on a social basis with the Gentiles before the cross. "The action of the council in the matter of the decree (Act_15:28,29) had opened the way of social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles in the church at Antioch, a freedom that Peter was glad to share." 22

In Acts 10-11 God had clearly showed Peter that no food or people was unclean. We next see he had fallen back into legalism.

b- Peter's wrong practice Galatians 2:12 b

"...before certain came from James..." James was the leader of the Church at Jerusalem. Peter was afraid of what might get back to James that he was doing. Peter acted as a hypocrite. He was acting one way one day and another way to next. He was saying one thing and doing another.

c- Influence is a trust. Galatians 2:13

We must remember that we who have influence over another also have a trust to be the right kind of example to follow. Other Jews as well as Barnabas was also taken in by this practice. Peter had lead him astray by his actions.

2- Paul Rebukes Peter Galatians 2:14-21

One writer said, "Paul surely was absent from Antioch when these events took place."23 Paul return to find that this has gone on and rebukes Peter.

a- Peter's actions laid beside of Gospel Galatians 2:14-15

We see that Paul laid the actions of Peter beside the pure gospel of grace. He saw that, "he walked not...according to the truth." Paul rebukes Peter in a public setting. We might find this harsh on the part of Paul but I remind you that Peter was only the leader and in one sense the rebuke was not only to Peter but to all the Jews in the church at Antioch.

b- Justified by faith and not by works. Galatians 2:16-21

Paul gives us in this section of chapter 2 the doctrine of justification by faith and faith alone. We will attempt to deal with this subject in greater detail in the up coming sections in the Pure Gospel We Were Promised section. We will in fact digress back into these verses in the future. This is a very important section and I apologize for passing over it so lightly.

Simply allow me to point out some of the highlights to introduce this teaching in this session. Galatians 2:16 clearly teaches that our salvation comes not by the keeping of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. We see in fact that the law cannot make us right with God. Galatians 2:19 states we are in fact, "Dead to the law..." that we can be alive in Christ. The life we have in fact is simply Christ living in us now. Galatians 2:20 .

I think that the most important verse to understand here is Galatians 2:21 . "I do not frustrate the grace of God..." What did he mean by this. Simply this, if once we are saved by grace through faith and this is a completed work for our salvation when we try to bring the bondage to the law back into the formula we are frustrating or as the ASV says we, "make void" the pure gospel of grace. "If righteousness could be obtained by law, the death of Christ would be unexplainable; it would be a wasted gesture." 24

I remind us also that Christ prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." Mat_26:39 My friend it was not possible because salvation was not possible without the suffering Christ did on the cross for our sin.

Paul went to a great deal of trouble as he defended the gospel before the Apostles and the false brethren in Jerusalem as well as taking a stand against Peter in Antioch to insure that this Gospel remain pure and that it not be frustrated by the inclusion of the works of the law.