

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

An Expository Study

Verse-by-Verse

S H Lim

Jan – Mar 2025

Life B-P Church Sanctuary Sunday School

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- ☐ The complete lessons' notes will be progressively given via this **fixed QR code link**



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Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: The Salutation

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1:1-5).

- In his salutation, Paul sets forth 1) his Divine appointment as an Apostle with urgency, 2) from where and when he wrote, 3) to whom, 4) greetings of grace and peace and then dives into 5) the theme: Christ's efficacious sacrifice for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world to the glory of God our Father forever and ever. Amen.
- Paul chooses every word with purpose and orders his arguments constructively. If we read God's Word carefully and pay attention to the details, we will be fully blessed.

The Urgent Parenthesis: “Not of Men, neither by Man”

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) (1:1).

(Brackets not in the original Greek. Also misplaced in the KJV).

of ἀπ’ (denotes a point from which something begins, such as Jerusalem, Lk 24.47).

men ἀνθρώπων

by δι’; of the intermediate agent (e.g. 1 Cor 1:9 “through God, we were called into fellowship with His Son). man ἀπόστολος (singular)

- **Not of men, neither by man**—is a parenthetical phrase—the first and only time Paul uses one in a salutation. This was due to an urgency to immediately tackle the charges levied against his Apostleship and the departure away into “another” Gospel.

Salutation—Paul, An Apostle

Paul, **an apostle**, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) (1:1).

- **ἀπόστολος**—one sent, messenger, missionary. Used of the Twelve, and of Jesus, Who said, “Peace *be* unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (Jn 20:21, Heb 3:1).
- Paul uses his apostolic title only when needed, as in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Galatians—where cardinal doctrines are at stake, or in 1 and 2 Tim and Titus to validate Timothy and Titus’ pastoral appointment and authority.
- Paul did not use his apostolic title in 1 and 2 Thess (his first two epistles assuring the believers that they had not missed the Rapture and that those who had died first shall rise again before those still alive when the Lord returns) and in Philippians and Philemon (two heart-warming letters), or in Hebrews, a treatise for the Jews, for he was not their Apostle.

Salutation—Source of Paul's Apostleship

Paul, an apostle... by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead (1:1b).

- By **διὰ**—by the direct **Divine appointment of Jesus Christ and God the Father**
- **Who raised Him from the dead: -**
 - Looks to the **confirmed promise to Abraham 430 years before the Law (3:17)**. Abraham accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, so received God's oath, "In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (Gen 22:17-18, Heb 11:17-19).
 - Proof of the Gospel's efficacy to save and sanctify all who believe, both Jews and Gentiles, breaking the power of cancelled sin and setting the prisoner free.

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- By **διὰ**—by the direct **Divine appointment of Jesus Christ and God the Father**
- **Who raised Him from the dead: -**
 - A reminder that Abraham accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, so received God's oath, "In multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (Gen 22:17-18, Heb 11:17-19)—the **confirmed promise to Abraham 430 years before the Law** (3:17).
 - Proof of the Gospel's efficacy to save and sanctify all who believe, both Jews and Gentiles, breaking the power of cancelled sin and setting the prisoner free.

Salutation—The Brethren with Me (Place of Writing)

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia (1:2).

- Paul reveals from where he was writing, for he later says, “But when Peter came (ἦλθεν) to Antioch” (Gal 2:11). Otherwise, he would write, “When Peter went to Antioch.” All the brethren which are with me” is the **church at Antioch, Syria**, Paul’s missionary-sending base. This is his only epistle with such a salutation—which Paul wrote from Antioch.
- Paul, Silas and Timothy went throughout Phrygia and the region of **Galatia** during the second missionary journey. On their return, on reaching Jerusalem, Silas ended his journey and was not with Paul when Paul wrote Galatians (cf. 1 and 2 Thess). Paul continued to Antioch, where he “spent some time”—and wrote Galatians before “he departed and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples” **c. AD 52**. (Act 16:6, 18:22-23). Galatians requires Paul alone, the Apostle to the Gentiles, to write.

The Churches of Galatia

And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia (1:2b).

- Paul addressed the **churches of Galatia**—the only occurrence of the plural form, churches. Galatia was a region or province with many small assemblies.
- 1 & 2 Cor and 1 & 2 Thess were addressed to a church. Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were to “the saints”. These were all in cities and not a spread-out region.
- Paul’s practice is to send an epistle before visiting a church to allow them time to get ready before he arrives. He, thus, would have written from Antioch, Syria, after his second missionary journey before he embarked on his third journey, with Galatia as his first stop.
- This also explains 1:6—how quickly they fell—since the Galatians were only evangelised during Paul’s second journey and had fallen by the time he returned to Antioch.

Recap: Paul's Visits to the Region of Galatia

- Barnabas and Paul split over John Mark before the second missionary journey. Paul took Silas **c. early AD 49** and they delivered the Jerusalem decree in Syria, Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra, where Timothy was added and circumcised (the three together wrote 1 and 2 Thess). They then preached through Phrygia and **the region of Galatia** (Act 15:40-16:6).
- At the close of the second missionary journey, Paul sailed from Ephesus after a short stop and **landed at Caesarea, then went up to Jerusalem** (where Silas ended his mission) **to greet the church before going down to Antioch** (Act 18:18-22).
- After Paul had spent some time *there* (Antioch, Syria), he departed on his third journey and **went over all the country of Galatia** and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples (Act 18:23). The evangelisation at Act 16:6 had been successful!

Grace and Peace

Grace *be* to you and **peace** from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3).

Paul always greets his recipients with grace and peace (his deep desire for them) in his salutations before diving into his central theme.

- **Χάρις**—Grace, unmerited favour of God that we cannot merit for ourselves (If we could, it is no longer grace). Grace is what God does for us that we cannot do by ourselves.

In Grace: God *gives us what we do not deserve*—forgiveness, sanctification and blessing. In Mercy **ἔλεος**: God *does not give us the judgement that we deserve*.

- **εἰρήνη**—State of tranquillity or harmony that comes from a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Removal of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, reconciling to God in one body by the cross by the Prince of Peace (Jn 14:27, Eph 2:11-16, Phil 4:7).

Grace and Peace

- Paul's usual greeting as in Rom 1:7, 1 Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 1:2, Eph 1:2, Phil 1:2, Col 1:2, 1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:2 and Phm 3.
- In Hebrews: Paul dives into the theme (1:1-13) but says at the end, "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord... Now the God of peace...Make you perfect" (12:14, 13:20-21b). "we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear". "Be not carried about with...strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace.." (12:28, 13:9a).
- In the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Tim 1:2, 2 Tim 1:2 and Tit 1:4 c AD 63-66, Paul adds **mercy** ("**grace, mercy and peace**") perhaps because teachers receive the greater condemnation (Jas 3:1) or because the times had grown more evil then.

Theme—Christ's Finished, Complete Work

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom *be glory forever and ever. Amen.* (1:4-5).

- **The Sacrifice of Christ is efficacious for our deliverance from this present evil world.** We need nothing more—no other way or works—for our justification and sanctification!
 - Jesus is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30).
 - He was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification (Rom 4:25).
- **According to the will of God and our Father: To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen**
Salvation is the Lord's! (cf. Mt 6:13, Lk 2:14, Rom 11:36, 16:27, Eph 1:12, Phil 4:20, 1 Tim 4:17, 2 Tim 4:18, Heb 13:21, 1 Pet 5:11, 2 Pet 3:18, Jude 1:25, Rev 4:9-11, 5:12, 7:12).

The South Galatian Theory

- In 25 BC in Augustus' reign, Rome incorporated Pisidia into the Province of Galatia for its first Governor, Cornutus Arrutius Aquila, to construct the Via Sebaste at the central Antioch Pisidia plateau, from where it separated southwest and southeast to connect the Homonadesians. Completed in 6 BC, the Via Sebaste ran over the Taurus Mountains and down to Perga on the coast. Antioch was elevated to a *Colonia Caesarea* (capital city). In AD 74, Vespasian detached Pisidia from Galatia. Based on this history, **William Ramsay** (author of *St Paul, the Traveller and Roman Citizen*) theorised that the Galatian churches were in Antioch, Pisidia, of the first missionary journey (Act 13:14-52), resurrecting the South Galatian theory ("SGT"). This is today promoted by **FF Bruce**, General Editor of the NIV, making this the popular theory taught in seminaries and bible colleges today.
- A natural reading of Acts does not yield the SGT, which adds confusion and problems of its own, distracting from a clear understanding of the Galatian issues.

Ramsay's Misreading of Gal 4:13

- The British enjoyed hill retreats. Ramsay's RV rendered the Gk ὅτι in Gal 4:13 as "because" ... of a bodily illness, I preached the gospel to you the first time." He conjectured that Paul went up to Antioch 1200m above sea level due to an *epileptic attack*. However, there is no evidence that Paul had epilepsy, and taking a retreat was unlike Paul, who preached soon after being stoned at Lystra (Act 14:19-23), resulting in the Galatians hearing the Gospel.
- The KJV: How "through" infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel... is preferable. Despite his infirmity, Paul preached on his first visit. They were touched and "would gladly give their eyes to him"—indicating the nature of his infirmity. Although Paul survived the Lystra stoning, he received permanent scars, including on his eyes—the brand marks of Jesus. Paul needed an amanuensis to write for him and signed off with large letters (Gal 6:11, 17). That Lystra was after Paul's visit to Pisidian Antioch eliminates Pisidia as the Galatian churches.
- Paul also had a thorn in the flesh to humble him after ecstatic visions c AD 42 (2 Cor 12:1-9).

Map of Roman Empire in NT Times



Maps showing the routes of Paul's missionary journeys are coloured by the author's interpretation. Modern maps are influenced by FF Bruce, a modern South Galatian theory proponent, proposal that Paul's second journey through Phrygia and Galatia could have run through Antioch, Pisidia.¹ This is a map without routes drawn.

¹ F F Bruce, *Galatian problems. North or South Galatians?* 12 Nov 1969 Lecture in John Rylands Library.

Map of Roman Empire in NT Times



A Claim that Galatians was Earlier than Act 15

Some SGT proponents claim that Galatians was written before Act 15 “since Paul did not cite the Jerusalem decree to refute the Judaizers”. (This was not the view of Ramsay, who held that “Galatians contained advanced theology”). They misunderstand Paul and overlook: -

- Before Act 15, the Judaizers said circumcision was necessary for salvation. “And certain men which came down from Judaea...*said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved “...certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying...needful to circumcise them and command to keep the law of Moses (Act 15:1, 5). After the Jerusalem decree, the Judaizers introduced a new seductive idea of law-keeping for sanctification (not salvation) “to be perfect and please the Lord”—a subtle change that caught even Peter and nearly Barnabas as well—which Paul answers in Chaps 2 & 3.
- No Pauline epistle mentions the decree. Paul’s authority stemmed not from Jerusalem. It was the other way around—The Council recognised his Gospel to the Gentiles.

Refutations of The South Galatian Theory

There are many other factors against the South Galatian Theory: -

- Luke named Antioch thrice, as being in Pisidia twice, in the first journey (Act 13:14, 14:19, 21, 24). Why omit this mention if Paul visited Pisidia on his second and third journeys?
- One congregation was formed at Antioch-Pisidia (*although Ramsay found several church ruins, not necessarily from Paul's time), while Gal 1:2 addresses "churches".
- The mention in Gal 2:11-12 of when Peter and certain from James came to Antioch would confuse the Galatians if they were churches in Antioch, Pisidia.
- Paul went through Syria, Cilicia, Derby, Lystra, and Iconium before Phrygia and the region of Galatia in his second journey. He went straight to Galatia at the start of the third journey (Act 18:23). Antioch, Pisidia, 1200m above sea level, was too far away to be this first stop.
- The chronology in Gal 1:18 and 2:1 rules out the SGT (these shall be discussed later).

Astonishment at their Quick Fall from Grace

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ (1:6a).

- I marvel **Θαυμάζω**—Paul was astonished, perplexed, shocked!

Silas was with Paul when they evangelized Galatia. Silas would have explained the Jerusalem decree to them. They had received the Gospel of Grace so readily and would even have plucked out their eyes for Paul, but now have deserted the Gospel.

- How quickly **ταχέως**—They were just converted during Paul's second missionary journey (Act 16:6), which Paul had just returned from, when he received news of their fall from grace. From Galatia to Antioch, Syria was about two weeks by foot for the news to arrive.
- They were soon deserting **μετατίθεσθε** the One who called them unto the **grace of Christ**.

Another Gospel, Which is Not Another

...unto another gospel. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ (1:6b-7).

- Unto another ἕτερον (“another of a different kind”) Gospel. The Judaisers (“some that trouble you”) were teaching a different or fake substitute Gospel of a different kind.
- Which is not another ἄλλο (“another of the same kind”)

In Jn 14:16, Jesus promised to pray to the Father to give His followers ἄλλον (another of the same kind as He) Παράκλητον Paraclete (Helper of Comforter)—God, the Holy Spirit.
- The Judaisers would pervert the **Gospel of Christ**, but there is no other efficacious Gospel for salvation and sanctification than what Christ obtained by His death and resurrection. On Calvary’s cross, Jesus breathed out His last, declaring, “**It is finished!**” (Jn 19:30).

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Anathema to Whoever Preaches a Different Gospel

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, **let him be accursed**. *As we said before, so say I now again*, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed** (1:8-9).

- Whoever preaches any other “different” Gospel than that which Paul and his team had proclaimed to them—whether it was Paul himself or an angel from heaven—let him be (present, imperative, active) **ἀνάθεμα accursed** (Act 23:14, Rom 9:3, 1 Cor 12:3, 16:22).
- Paul repeats like an oath: If anyone preaches any other ... **let him be anathema!**
- The Judaizers insidiously draw believers away from Christ alone (to circumcision and Law-keeping), endangering souls. Such Gospel perverters are **assuredly accursed!**

Was Paul Seeking to Please Men or God?

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (1:10).

- The Judaizers claimed that Paul, by not requiring Law-keeping and circumcision, wished to please ἀρέσκειν men and not God, “otherwise, they will keep the Law to please the Lord”.
- Paul says that if his motive was to please men, he would not be Christ’s δοῦλος bondslave, receiving no wage, doing only his master’s will: “As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1 Thess 4:1).
- This is exemplified by the Lord in Jn 8:29, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. At Jacob’s well with the Samaritan woman, Jesus prioritised saving souls to food and “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn 4:34).

Paul Certifies His Gospel as from Jesus Christ

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:11-12).

- The Judaizers attacked Paul's Gospel as being a human doctrine for not requiring Gentile circumcision. In reality, it was they who were teaching the doctrine of men.
- **Paul certifies** that he did not receive this after man **but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- Per Act 9:22, "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ". The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled in Jesus as Prophet, High Priest and King, transcending all that is in the Old Covenant, incl. the Temple, the covenants, ceremonial laws, and sacrifices. **Jesus alone, having fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, is the Author and Perfector of our Faith** (Heb 12:2).

Paul's Former Advances in Judaism

For ye have heard of **my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion**, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And **profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals** in mine own nation, **being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers (1:13-14)**.

- Paul reminds them of his well-known former life as chief persecutor of the Christians.

Compare: “I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, ... And I persecuted this way unto the death...” (Act 22:3-4a). “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil 3:5-6).

If Law-keeping is necessary for the Gentiles, Paul would be the first to have required it!

Paul—Chosen from His Mother’s Womb

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (1:15-16).

- **God, in His wisdom and foreknowledge, chose Paul from his mother’s womb** to be the **Apostle to the heathen (Gentiles)**. Paul, brought up in Jerusalem, a Pharisee of Pharisees, was the top student of **Gamaliel**, in turn the first to have both the title *Rabban* (“our teacher”) and *ha-Zaqen* (Elder), and grandson of the great Hillel the Elder.
- **Paul preached Christ immediately after his conversion**. Aside from time in Arabia, he ministered at Damascus, increasing in strength until the Jews decided to kill him three years later, resulting in his first visit to Jerusalem. (cf. Act 9:20, 22: “And **straightway, he preached Christ** in the synagogues,...Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”)

Paul's First Meeting with Peter

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. **Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,** and abode with him fifteen days (1:17-18).

- Paul ministered **three years in Damascus** including time in Arabia—and did not go to Jerusalem until after three years. Cf: Act 9:23-27a: “And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:.. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then, the disciples took him by night and let *him* down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem...Barnabas ...brought *him* to the apostles.”
- Cf. also 2 Cor 11:32-33: “In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands”.

AD 37—Paul’s First Jerusalem Meeting with Peter

In History/Josephus: Herod Antipas had divorced Phasaelis, the daughter of the Nabatean King Aretas IV, to marry Herodias (his half-brother Herod Philip II’s wife, earning John the Baptist’s rebuke). Aretas later defeated Antipas in AD 36 at the border of Perea and Nabatea. Tiberius sent troops to help Antipas, but when he died on 14 March AD 37, Damascus, by all accounts, passed into Aretas’ hands. Caligula later exiled Antipas.



Left: Stone excavated at Petra, the Nabatean Capital, in Latin, “*King Aretas’ 46th year or AD 37, quoted by the Apostle Paul circa the time of his conversion*”. **Aretas IV controlled Damascus in AD 37** when the Jews sought to kill Paul (2 Cor 11:32-33), making AD 34 the earliest date of Paul’s conversion—*The inscriber probably thought that Acts 9:18-25 happened in one year*—which most scholars agree as two years after Christ’s Passion. **Paul thus first met Peter at Jerusalem in AD 37.**

Paul's Oath about His First Visit to Peter and James

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, **behold, before God, I lie not.** (1:19-20)

- During this visit, Paul only met with Peter and James, and not the other Apostles.
- **Paul's Gospel, thus, did not come from the Jerusalem Apostles**—the Judaizers' slander. Perhaps they claim that Paul was not an eye-witness of Jesus' earthly ministry, unlike the Twelve. Thus, his "Apostleship" was second-hand, of men through Peter and the other Apostles, and by man (Paul's own will) and not commissioned directly by Jesus.
- **Paul avows before God that he is not lying:** That he did not go to the Apostles at Jerusalem during the first three years of his ministry.

Paul Moves to Tarsus, Cilicia, and Antioch, Syria

Afterwards I came into the **regions of Syria and Cilicia**; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me (1:21-24).

- Cf. “And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. **Then had the churches rest** throughout ...” (Acts 9:28-31a).
- He would be at Tarsus, Cilicia, for two years (cf. Act 15:23) until brought by Barnabas to Antioch, where they taught for an entire year, and the disciples first called **Χριστιανούς**. At that time, **c. late AD 40** (Caligula’s reign), Agabus prophesied at Antioch of severe famine, which took place in the reign of Claudius (from 24 Jan AD 41) (Act 11:25-28).

A Private Second Visit 14 Years After Paul's Conversion

Then **fourteen years after** I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and **took Titus with me** also. 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 (2:1-2).

- Scholars agree that Paul's two visits to Jerusalem (1:18 and 2:1) are parallel—three and 14 years from his conversion (**AD 37 and 48**, respectively). The second trip was private due to a revelation to Paul to check his Gospel to the Gentiles beforehand with the Apostles to **confirm that he was not running or had run in vain**.
- Per Ramsay, this trip was not the public Jerusalem Council (which he dated AD 49-50). He wrongly equated it to Act 11:30 (equating Paul's revelation with Agabus' famine prophecy), which he prolonged to AD 46 (but Herod Agrippa I died in AD 44) while dating Paul's conversion as AD 32 to get 14 years. His scheme vastly shortened Paul's ministry years.

A Private Second Visit 14 Years After Paul's Conversion

- Ramsay's dates do not fit historical facts. Act 11:30 occurred in AD 43 when Herod Agrippa I was alive. Paul was converted in AD 34. The Jerusalem Council was held in AD 48.
- Scholars on both sides appear defenceless against the other side—the Gal 2:1 visit cannot be that in Act 15 nor Act 11:30. They overlook the **long abode at Antioch in Act 14:28** (AD 48), sufficient time for Paul to visit Jerusalem 300km away by horse, boat or walking and for Cephas and James to reciprocate with a visit to Antioch.
- After a successful first mission, one would quickly embark on the second journey, had not many things been brewing. John Mark had left them at Perga after Paul preached to Sergius Paulus, a Gentile. The Judaizers had come to Antioch requiring circumcision and Law-keeping. Paul thus received a private revelation to visit Peter and James early.

Reaction: Titus was not compelled to be circumcised

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised (2:3).

- Titus, a Greek Gentile, was not compelled ἠναγκάσθη to be circumcised during Paul's second visit (within Act 14:28)—a practice later confirmed by the Act 15 Jerusalem decree.
- Paul later circumcised Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess, “as there were many Jews in the cities where they had to deliver the Jerusalem decree” (Act 16:1-4).
- Jewish converts, too, are saved by the Gospel of grace but are to observe circumcision and the legalistic aspect of the Law—unless no longer possible, such as the annual Passover after the Temple's destruction in AD 70)—for their national identity as the children of Abraham and of Israel (Gen 17:9-14, Ex 31:13-14), not for salvation.

Not Yielding For Even One Moment Unto Bondage

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: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (2:4-5).

- He writes (from Antioch, Act 18:22-23) that his visit to Peter was due to the **false brethren** who secretly came in to spy on their liberty in Christ to bring them into bondage.
- This liberty is the liberty of the Spirit of the Lord—the freedom to walk in the Spirit and not do the works of the flesh (2 Cor 3:17, Gal 5:1, 16)
- They did not yield to this subjection even for an hour—a single moment—**so that the truth of the Gospel may continue with you** (Galatians Gentile converts).

Apostolic Stature Added Nothing to Paul's Gospel

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 (2:6)

- Paul elucidates on Gal 1:1, 10-12, 2:2—His Gospel to the Gentiles was directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. It was not of men or by man.
- He was not belittling Peter or James as Apostles to the Jews, but showing that whatever their status had no whit of bearing—added nothing οὐδὲν “to me”—to his Gospel received and taught. It made no difference who they were as far as the Gospel was concerned.
- Application: Popes, Archbishops and Bishops cannot change the Gospel and the faith that was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3).

Apostleship to the Jews Vis-a-Viz the Gentiles

But contrariwise, **when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me**, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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 (2:7-9)

- James, Cephas and John perceived that the Gospel to the Gentiles was committed to Paul, just as the Gospel to the Jews was unto them, **so gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that they should go to the Gentiles, while they go unto the Jews.**
- In the Wisdom of God, Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrew, and a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, was God's chosen vessel to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. If James, Peter or John did it, the Judaizers would demand that the Gentiles keep the Law and be circumcised.

Only—Remember the Poor

Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do (2:10).

- The Law commands helping the poor, e.g. “If there be among you **a poor man** of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother” (Deut 15:7).
- The Jerusalem Apostles did not require Law-keeping and circumcision of the Gentiles—but only that **they remember the poor**, which Paul had been actively and eager to do.
- The Jerusalem Council later decreed not to trouble or burden the Gentiles who are turned to God, except to stipulate four necessary commandments: Abstain from the pollution of idols, fornication, things strangled, and eating blood (Act 15:19-29).

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

An Expository Study

S H Lim

Acts and Galatians Historical Dates

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter (1:18). Then, fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem (2:1a). But when Peter was come to Antioch (2:11a)

- The Epistle to the Galatians holds the keys to the Chronology of the Book of Acts and the Old Testament (which we will discuss when we get to 3:18).
- Let us look at the established reigns of Roman Emperors in NT times.

NT Chronology: Established Reigns of Roman Emperors

Tiberius Caesar Augustus	17 Sep 14 – 16 Mar 37
Caligula Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus	18 Mar 37 – 24 Jan 41
Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus	24 Jan 41 – 13 Oct 54
Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus	13 Oct 54 – 9 Jun 68
Caesar Vespasianus Augustus	21 Dec 69 – 23 Jun 79
Titus Caesar Vespasianus Augustus	24 Jun 79 – 13 Sep 81

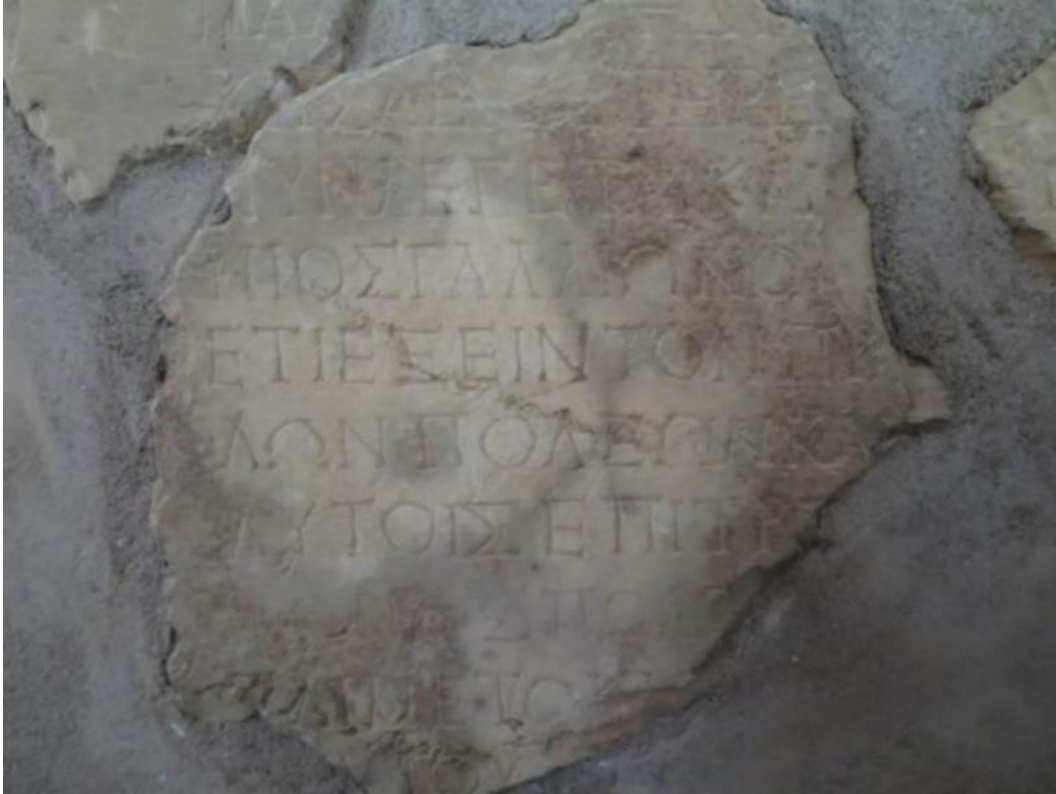
Gospel and Galatians Dates from Tiberius' Reign

- Per Lk 3:1-3, John the Baptist commenced his ministry in the **fifteenth year of Tiberius** (17 Sep AD 14 – 16 Mar AD 37) i.e. from the Autumn of AD 28.
- Jesus' first Passover of ministry was in AD 29. In Jn 2:20, the Jews said to Jesus, "Forty and six years was this temple *in building*." In Antiquities 15.11.1, Josephus reported that Herod published the Temple rebuilding design in his 18th year after Nisan in 20 BC. After the Jews accepted this, the enormous preparations began. The rebuilding thus would start only *after* Passover 19 BC, with the 46th anniversary *after* Passover AD 28. When Jesus visited Jerusalem during Passover AD 29, it was still the 46th year of rebuilding. (Source: Henry Browne).
- Jesus ministered through four Passovers (Jn 2:13, 5:1, 6:4, and 11:55) **until AD 32**. Paul was converted in AD 34, two years after Christ's Resurrection.

Caligula (18 Mar 37–24 Jan 41). Claudius (24 Jan 41–13 Oct 54)

- In Act 11:27-30, Agabus came to Antioch and prophesied of famine, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar—i.e. Agabus came in Caligula’s reign c. late AD 40. Relief was collected and sent to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Paul before Herod Agrippa I (who arrested Peter in Act 12) died in AD 44.
- In AD 49, **Claudius** expelled the Jews from Rome, including Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul met on his arrival in Corinth (Act 18). An Inscription found at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in 1905 was a decree of Claudius dated AD 52 referring to a report by “L. Junius Gallio, my Friend and Proconsul”—dating Gallio’s arrival as Proconsul to c Jun-Jul AD 51. Paul arrived 18 months earlier c. Jan AD 50. The **Jerusalem Council**, 15 months earlier, would thus be c. **Autumn AD 48**.

AD 52 Claudius Inscription At Delphi



Words, “Gallio, My friend and Proconsul”

Nine fragments from Temple of Apollo at Delphi—
a decree dated **AD 52**: “**Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus**, invested with tribunician power, acclaimed Imperator for the 26th time, Father of the Fatherland. For a long time, I have been well-disposed towards the city of Delphi but also solicitous for its prosperity. I have always guarded the cult of the Pythian Apollo. But now it is said to be destitute of citizens, as L. Junius Gallio, my Friend and Proconsul, recently reported to me.”

Gallio, Achaia’s first Proconsul, must have arrived in Corinth by mid-AD 51 to have completed the survey and sent a report to Caesar.

Peter's Reciprocal Visit and Lapse at Antioch, Syria

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed (2:11).

- At Paul's private visit with Barnabas and Titus to Jerusalem during the Act 14:28 long abode, James, Peter and John placed no conditions on the Gentile converts—except to remember the poor.
- Peter then reciprocated (during the same Act 14:28 abode) and came **ηλθεν** to Antioch, where he ate with the Gentiles until some came from James.
- Then Peter stumbled, stumbling others.

Peter Stood Blameworthy

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 (2:12).

- When certain came from James, Peter separated from the Gentiles, **being afraid of φοβούμενος** (present, participle, middle/passive) these of the circumcision party.
- Eleven years earlier, Peter was led to Cornelius' household. They received the Gospel, spoke in tongues and magnified God. After baptizing them, Peter and six Jewish brethren stayed with Cornelius for some days. On their return, the circumcision party confronted them, but after recounting the events, the Jerusalem church glorified God for granting repentance to the Gentiles (Act 10:1-11:18),
- It was very hypocritical for Peter to now act this way, but he had his weaknesses.

The Others Stumbled by Peter's Hypocrisy

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (2:13).

- Peter's example stumbled the other Jewish believers and *also or nearly* Barnabas.
- How easy it is to fall into legalism and a “holier than you” attitude—the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, which Jesus warned the Twelve to take heed and beware of (Mt 16:6). Leaven or yeast is a fast-acting and spreading enzyme.
- It was infectious, affecting the other Jews, who “dissembled likewise”.
- Even the Apostles are still men. This explains Paul's precautionary inclusion of himself to be accursed should he preach a different Gospel (1:8-9, 2:6-9).

Paul's In-the-Moment Open Rebuke of Peter

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? (2:14).

- When I saw εἶδον (aorist indicative active) that they walked not uprightly **according to the truth of the Gospel**, I said εἶπον (aorist indicative active) to Peter—Paul was spontaneous to the moment, responding immediately.
- If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles—Peter was born a Jew, but all who cannot perfectly keep the Law are living ζῆς (present indicative active) no different from Gentiles. If so, why compel the Gentiles to observe the Law and Jewish customs?

Jews By Nature Vs Gentiles

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles (2:15).

- We who are Jews—Peter and all Jews, including Paul himself.
- By nature, i.e. born as Jews—which confers huge advantages: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom 3:1-2).
- Gentiles without the Law (Gal 3:19)—had no constraints against sin; i.e. were sinners. Yet, not the hearers but the doers of the Law shall be justified (Rom 2:13).
- Application: We may have God’s Word in our Church, but we must never forget that we are only sinners, saved by grace. Not the hearers but the doers of Christ’s Law from a heart of love, shall be justified.

No Man can be Justified by Works, only by Christ

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 (2:16).

- The believing Jews know that no man is justified **δικαιοῦται** (present indicative middle/passive: done for us) by the works of the Law.
- Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified **δικαιωθῶμεν** (aorist, subjunctive, passive: justification is done for us) by the faith of Christ.
- Not of the works of the Law—The Scriptures have confined all under sin due to our fallen nature, which cannot perfectly keep the Law (Dt 27:26, Gal 3:22).

We Cannot Depend on Law and Grace at the Same Time

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 (2:17).

- If while we seek ζητοῦντες (present participle, active—doing something or some works) to be justified δικαιωθῆνα (aorist, infinitive passive) by Christ: This is attempting to be justified in the flesh, and by grace at the same time
- We ourselves are found sinners—when we fail, which we will (Gal 5:19-21)—**Is therefore Christ the minister of sin?** Is Christ to be blamed? Cf: “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written” (Rom 2:24).
- **God forbid.** This is an impossibility altogether. We cannot depend on law and grace at the same time! It must be Sola Christus—100% Christ alone!

If I rebuild what I destroyed, I make myself a Transgressor

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor (2:18).

- For if I build οἰκοδομῶ (present, indicative active) again the things which I had once torn down κατέλυσσα (aorist, indicative active)—I make myself a transgressor.
- If after I forsook Law-keeping for justification and sanctification and trusted in Christ, I turn back to the Law—build back what I tore down—I become a transgressor.

Through the Law, We are dead to the Law

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God (2:19).

- **The Law condemns to death those who do not keep the Law perfectly (Dt 27:26).**
“What shall we say then? *Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.... For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*” (Rom 7:7-9, 11)
- **Through the Law, I died—freeing me from the Law—that I might live unto God!**

Crucified with Christ: Nevertheless, I Live

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 (2:20).

This is Paul's life theme: Dying to his old zealous Judaism, "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Phil 3:7-10).

Crucified with Christ: Nevertheless, I Live

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (2:20a).

- **I am crucified** συνεσταύρωμαι· (perfect indicative middle/passive) **with Christ**. The passive tense indicates that it is not something we can do—I cannot crucify myself with Christ—it is **vicarious**, reckoned to us, being in Him, who was crucified for us.
- Nevertheless, I live ζῶ· (perfect indicative active, first person singular)—I actively live (raised with Christ into newness of life); yet not I (for I am dead) but Christ liveth ζῆ (perfect indicative active) my new life in me.

And the Life I now Live, I Live by the Faith of the Son of God

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 (2:20b).

- And the life I now live in the flesh **σαρκί**, I live **ζῶ**· (perfect indicative active, first person singular)—a present state of fact that I live.
- By the faith of the Son of God, who loved **ἀγαπήσαντός** me and gave **παραδόντος** (both: aorist participle active, genitive, masculine singular)—completed actions of loving me and giving Himself for me—the Finished Work of Christ.
- Paul will command us, in this faith in the Son, to walk **Περιπατεῖτε** (present imperative active) by the Spirit and we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (5:16, 22-25).

If Righteousness Comes from the Law, Christ Died in Vain

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (2:21).

- I do not frustrate ἀθετῶ set aside or nullify the grace of God.
- If righteousness is from (is achieved by) the Law—then **Christ died for no purpose**—and we have no need for the Gospel of the grace of Christ Jesus.

Questions To Ponder

1. Why did Paul bring Titus along with him to see Peter in Jerusalem?
 - a) Why was Titus not circumcised, but Timothy was?
 - b) What freedom in Christ did they have that should not be lost to legalistic bondage?
2. Should Jewish converts be circumcised today?
3. What about the various sects that require circumcision today?
4. What does Paul mean by “disregarding the pillars”? (cf 1:8-9)
5. What does it mean for James, Cephas, and John to give Barnabas and Paul the right hand of fellowship to go to Gentiles? And to remember the poor?