

## The Book of Galatians

## Chapter 2

## Background

- Written by Paul possibly as early as A.D. 49.
- The purpose of this letter is to counter the spread of false doctrines concerning salvation, especially the false teaching that believers must keep the Law for salvation.
- Outline
  - Defense of the Gospel – Chapters 1-4
  - Application of the Gospel – Chapters 5-6

## Chapter 2

## I. Paul's Personal Defense, continued – vs. 1-10

- vs. 1 – Paul's Third Trip to Jerusalem – Acts 15:1-35
- vs. 1 – fourteen years – after his first visit to Jerusalem in 1:18
- This visit to Jerusalem is of utmost importance to Paul's argument and to the development of Christianity. The earliest believers were all Jewish or proselytes to Judaism. Since the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 we have multitudes of Gentile believers. Should these new believers in Christ also be made servants of the Mosaic Law? This question is answered in conference at this meeting, but as you can tell from the book of Galatians it was not fully settled.
- vs. 2 – Paul was not summoned to appear in Jerusalem by any human authority.
- vs. 2 – Paul met with church leaders privately, not in public debate, to ensure they were in agreement
- vs. 3 – Exhibit A: Titus, a Gentile believer that was there with Paul and was not made to be circumcised.
- vs. 4 – John Gill: "These men are described as 'false brethren': they had the name, but not the grace, which entitles to the character of 'brethren'; they called themselves Christians, but were in reality Jews..."
- vs. 6-10 – There was fellowship, not friction or factions, between Paul and the church leadership in Jerusalem. They respected the sphere of each other's ministry and saw the harmony in the work of preaching the Gospel to the Jew and the Gentile.

## II. Paul vs. Peter – vs. 11-14

- The timing of this event is unknown, and it is not in Acts.

- Remember that the Jerusalem church is almost entirely Jewish and that the Antioch Church is largely Gentile.
- vs. 12 – Peter openly communed with the Gentile believers, stepping away from the Jewish traditions, until other staunchly Jewish believers arrived.
- vs. 13-14 – Peter’s actions and the teachings surrounding them appear to have torn at the unity of the church, with Jewish and Gentile believers not fellowshipping with one another.
- It is Paul who rises to the occasion to rebuke Peter for his harmful actions and the argue for faith and freedom in Christ. See also Psalm 141:5, Proverbs 27:5-6

### III. Faith vs. Works – vs. 15-21

- I am not sure if this portion is all Paul’s rebuttal of Peter’s actions or if he transitions somewhere away from his narrative into a doctrinal discussion.
- vs. 15-16 – the Law of God given to the Jews is inadequate to save and must seek salvation through faith in Christ. Romans 3 is a deeper look at this important doctrine.
- vs. 17- The error of including the Law in Salvation
  - I find the wording tricky in this verse. I think it means that since the Law points out our sin, and if that Law is mixed in with the message of Salvation by Grace, then Law continues to condemn us as sinners while we seek justification in Christ. Law and Grace cannot coexist.
- vs. 18 – The error of including the Law after Salvation
- vs. 19 – Romans 6:1-14, 7:7-25
- vs. 20 – Colossian 2:11-14, 3:3-4
- vs. 21 – If we can earn righteousness or be justify by our obedience to the Law, what need have we of a Savior? Ephesians 2:8-9