

Sunday, November 15, 2009—Grace Life School of Theology--Understanding Galatians and the Law—Galatians 2:1-5

Galatians 2:1

- When we last saw Paul in Chapter One he was not in Jerusalem but was operating out his hometown region of Syria and Cilicia.
 - Acts 22:17-21
 - Acts 9:29-30
 - Acts 11:22-26
- “Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem”
- The first word of verse one, “then” indicates that Paul is continuing the chronology that he started in Chapter One.
- Most commentators think this is the same visit to Jerusalem that is described in Acts 15. However, there are a number of differences in the accounts between Acts 15 and Galatians 2 which have led some to believe that the visit describe here took place in Acts 11 when Paul carried famine relief to Jerusalem.
 - Acts 11:27-30
- Charles F. Baker offers the following comparison between Luke’s account in Acts 15 and Paul’s account in Galatians 2 in his book *Understand the Book of Galatians*.

| Acts 15—Luke | Galatians 2—Paul |
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| The church sent them—Acts 15:3 | Went by special revelation—Gal. 2:1 |
| Accompanied by Barnabas, Titus not mentioned—Acts 15:2 | Accompanied by Barnabas and Titus—Gal. 2:1 |
| Opposed by those who were Pharisees—Acts 15:5 | Opposed by false brethren who slipped in privately to spy out their liberty—Gal. 2:4 |
| No mention | Other apostles added nothing to Paul understanding—Gal. 2:6 |
| No mention | Distinguishes between the gospel of the uncircumcision and the gospel of the circumcision—Gal. 2:7 |
| No mention | Agreement reached for Paul to go the gentiles and the other apostles to the Jews—Gal. 2:9 |
| Peter’s speech about being the first to preach to gentiles and how God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles—Acts 15:7-11 | No mention |
| Discourse by James on Amos 9—Acts 15:13-18 | No mention |
| Letter written freeing Gentiles from Mosaic Law and a disclaimer that they had sent these men to Antioch who were insisting on circumcision for Gentiles—Acts 15:23-29 | No mention |

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| Mentioned as Paul's third visit to Jerusalem. | Mentioned as second visit to Jerusalem. |
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- The next question we have to answer regarding Galatians 2 Verse 1 is how to count these 14 years. Should the fourteen years be counted from the last time Paul was in Jerusalem, in which case there would be a total of 17 years between Paul's conversion and the Jerusalem Council. A second option would be that these 14 years should be counted from time of his conversion which would result in a total of 14 years between Paul's conversion and the Jerusalem Council.
- Charles F. Baker thinks that the 14 years should be counted from the time of his conversion. Ernest R. Campbell suggests in his commentary that 17 years is the correct way of reckoning the chronology. Baker offers the following chronology to prove his point.

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| 30 A.D. | Pentecost |
| 35 A.D. | Saul's conversion |
| 38 A.D. | Saul's first visit to Jerusalem—(Gal. 1:18, Acts 9:26) |
| 38-45 A.D. | Saul preaches in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21, Acts 9:30) |
| 40 A.D. | Cornelius converted (Acts 10:32-48) |
| 45 A.D. | Reception of Gentile converts into Jewish church in Antioch. Barnabas brings Saul from Tarsus to minister in Antioch—(Acts 11:19-26) |
| 46 A.D. | Barnabas and Saul sent to Jerusalem with famine relief—(Acts 11:27-30, 12:25) |
| 47-48 A.D. | Saul and Barnabas on first missionary journey—(Acts 13:1-14:25) |
| 49 A.D. | Paul goes to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish apostles (Acts 15:1-29, Gal. 2:1-10). This is his second visit according to Paul and his third according to Luke. This is not a contradiction. Luke tells us of things Paul did which are not mentioned by Paul in his epistles, and vice versa. Paul does not state in Galatians 2:1 that this was his second visit to Jerusalem. He simply dates it as fourteen years later. |

- *“with Barnabas and took Titus with me also.”*
- In the second half of the verse we learn that Barnabas and Titus went with Paul.
- Acts 15:1-2—this is precisely what happened according to the book of Acts.
 - Notice what the reason is in Acts 15:1 for their going to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas had a dispute with the Judaizers over whether or not circumcision and law keeping were required for Gentile salvation.
- Acts 15:5-6—so Paul went to Jerusalem for the sole purpose of demonstrating the uniqueness of his teaching on Justification by grace through faith without the deeds of the Law.
- Paul had a purpose in taking Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert, with him. His purpose was to test the other apostles right in Jerusalem, to see if they would accept Titus without circumcision, or if they would insist that he be circumcised.

- This was the same group of same group of people who troubled the Galatians by teaching that law keeping and circumcision were necessary for their salvation after Paul had left the region. The chronology is clear; Paul had established churches in the region of Galatia which were being subverted by the teachings of the Judaizers, for which cause Paul goes to Jerusalem after 14 years to settle the issue once and for all.

Galatians 2:2

- *“And I went up by revelation”*
- Paul made this trip to Jerusalem due to the direct revelation of Jesus Christ that he should go. The Lord revealed to him that he should go to Jerusalem to settle the controversy over whether the Gentiles should be required to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.
- *“and communicated unto them the gospel which I preached among the gentiles”*
- When Paul got there he told them exactly what he had been preaching among the gentiles.
- Acts 13:13:34-39—Paul was preaching that justification was by grace through faith apart from the Law of Moses. This is the gospel Paul was talking about in Galatians 1:6-9 when he scolds the Galatians for being “so soon removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ.”
- *“but privately to them which were of reputation”*
- Paul privately set forth the gospel which he preached before those who were the reputed leaders at Jerusalem. Verse 9 makes it clear that this would have included at least Peter, James, and John.
- *“least by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.”*
- The expression “*in vain*,” means emptiness and to no purpose. This must not be interpreted to mean that Paul though his gospel might be in error; such an interpretation would be utterly contrary to his main argument that his gospel had been received from the Lord.
- If the Jerusalem church took a stand against his Gentile ministry, much of his labor would be overcome by their support of those Jews at Antioch who were insisting on putting the yoke of the Law on the Gentiles’ neck.
- The point Paul is making here is that if his Gospel was not confirmed by the Jerusalem leaders, it would have opened the way for destructive divisions in the Galatian churches. Furthermore, without their support behind his gospel, Paul could see the Judaizers totally free to undo what he had done, which some did regardless of the official sanction of his gospel (Acts 15:24).

Galatians 2:3

- *“But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised”*
- As stated earlier, Paul wanted to see if they would require Titus to be circumcised before they would have fellowship with them.
- The use of the word *“compelled”* clearly indicates that some tried to convince Titus that he needed to be circumcised. The Greek word translated *“compelled”* here means “to necessitate, compel, drive to, constrain,” according to *Strong’s Concordance*.

Galatians 2:4

- *“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in”*
- Paul thought he was having a private meeting in verse 2 but it turned out that somehow false brethren had entered into the meeting.
- The text says that these brethren were brought in “unawares.” This expression means secretly or surreptitiously brought in, or one who has stolen in, according to *Strong’s Concordance*.
- *“who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:”*
- Notice that these false brethren entered *“privily”* into the meeting. The word translated *“privily”* in your King James Bible means a) to come in secretly or by stealth, or creep or steal in, b) to enter in addition, come in besides. In other words these we uninvited guest how secretly wormed there way into what Paul thought was supposed to be a private meeting.
- The covert nature of this operation is obvious by Paul’s use of the term *“spy out.”* Once again, the Greek word translated *“spy out”* in the King James Version means “to inspect, view closely, in order to spy out and plot against.”
- In the context it is clear that these false covertly infiltrated this meeting in an attempt to spy out and plot against gentile liberty in Christ.
- Why are they seeking to *“spy out”* gentile liberty in Christ, *“that they might bring us into bondage.”* The Judaizers did not like the liberty or freedom that the gentile believers possessed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were seeking to bring them back under the bondage of the law.
- Galatians 5:1-3—in Paul’s mind when he refers to being in bondage he is talking about being under the law. These false brethren had entered into their midst in an attempt to bring them under the bondage of the law.
- Notice who Paul considers false brethren. Anyone who is attempting to place people under the bondage of the law. Anyone who desires to take away your liberty. According to Paul’s standard false brethren are everywhere today.

Galatians 2:5

- *“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”*
- What was Paul’s response to these false brethren? Paul utterly refuted their arguments and refused to be in subjection tot hem even for one hour.
- Paul did not yield one inch to these people. Paul pulpit was not a forum for the discussion of various views; it was the place where the truth of God was preached.
- Modern churchianity talks of love at the expense of conviction. There are very few who obey Paul’s instruction to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and fight the good fight. The Christian world talks a lot about setting aside our differences and uniting for the sake of Christ. Is it not ironic that when show the error of their ways from the word of God rightly divided the love they flaunt is not extended toward us?