

### Paul Rebukes Peter at Syrian Antioch (late 48)

Acts 15:1–2

Galatians 2:11–14

1 Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.  
12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came,

he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

### Paul’s Letter to the Galatian Churches – Part 1 (late 48)

Galatians 1

#### Introduction

1 Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

2 and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

5 to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen.

#### Reason for the Letter

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

### **Declaration of the Divine Origin of Paul's Gospel**

11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

### **Autobiographical Detail Supporting Paul's Declaration**

13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;

14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

15 But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased

16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)

21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

22 I was *still* unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;

23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."

24 And they were glorifying God because of me.

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## **Chronological Notes**

### 1) Identity of the Galatians.

- A) Galatians is the only Pauline letter that is not addressed to either an individual or to Christians in a specific city.<sup>1</sup> In the period of late antiquity, "Galatia" was an elastic term reflecting the changing political developments of central Asia Minor (Turkey).<sup>2</sup>
- B) Galatia became a Roman province in 25 BC, and the province included people from many ethnic groups, including the "Celts" or "Galatians," who had migrated to Asia Minor by 278 BC. In Paul's day the province was a large area that reached from the Black Sea in the north to the Mediterranean Sea in the south. As time passed, however, the province was reshaped and much of the territory in the south

<sup>1</sup> The destination of most of Paul's letters is clear: Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, Thessalonica, Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy George, "Galatians," *New American Commentary*, 38.

was removed and formed into the new province of Pisidia with Antioch as its capital.<sup>3</sup>

- C) Commentators in early church history naturally thought Galatians was written to the province as it existed in later Roman history (to the north). But the work of William Ramsay<sup>4</sup> and others has led modern scholars to reexamine this position in light of the earlier dimensions of the province in Paul's day (to the south).<sup>5</sup> This has led to the development of two theories regarding Paul's intended audience:
- (1) North Galatia.
    - (a) Geography: the middle to upper part of central Turkey.
    - (b) Cities: unknown cities to the north. Perhaps Ancyra (modern capital of Turkey), Pessinus and Tavium.
    - (c) Missionary Journey: churches founded on the second missionary journey and revisited on the third (Acts 16:6; 18:23).
  - (2) South Galatia.
    - (a) Geography: the southern part of central Turkey.
    - (b) Cities: Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
    - (c) Missionary Journey: churches founded on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13–14:23).
- D) While there are strong arguments for both theories, the south Galatia theory is preferable.<sup>6</sup> Below are some arguments for the south Galatian theory:<sup>7</sup>
- (1) We have clear record of the apostle's visit to, and establishment of churches in, the cities of the Roman province of southern Galatia, whereas we have no definite record of such in northern Galatia proper.
  - (2) Paul repeatedly alludes to Barnabas in Galatians 2 as though he were well known to them. We know Barnabas accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey, but he was not with Paul on his second or any subsequent journey as far as is known.
  - (3) In Galatians 1, Paul makes a strong case for his independence from the Jerusalem apostles by detailing each visit he made to Jerusalem. If he omitted a visit, he would open himself to the charge that his gospel was influenced by the apostles. Since only two visits are recorded in Galatians

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<sup>3</sup> Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia*, 2–5.

<sup>4</sup> William M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, "Galatians," *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Older commentators favor the north Galatia theory (Lightfoot), while most modern commentators favor the south Galatia Theory (F. F. Bruce).

<sup>7</sup> For more arguments see: Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxiii–lxx; Rainer Riesner, *Paul's Early Period*, 286–291; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 24–29.

(matching Acts 9:26–30 and 11:27–30), the letter must have been written before the Council of Acts 15 and thus must be addressed to the only churches that existed in Galatia at the time (cities in the south).<sup>8</sup>

## 2) Date.

A) As can be seen from the third argument in favor of the south Galatia theory, the date of the letter and its destination are linked:

- (1) If addressed to churches in south Galatia, then the letter was written shortly after Paul's first missionary journey and either prior to or just after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. This puts the letter's date at AD 48–50 (Early Date).
- (2) If addressed to churches in north Galatia, then the letter was written after Paul's second missionary journey and either prior to or during his third missionary journey. This puts the letter's date at AD 53–58 (Late Date).

B) Another important factor for dating the letter is the correlation of Paul's visits to Jerusalem recorded in Acts and Galatians.

(1) In Acts, Luke records five visits by Paul to Jerusalem:

- Conversion visit (Acts 9:26–30).
- Famine visit (Acts 11:27–30).
- Jerusalem Council visit (Acts 15:1–29).
- Hasty visit (Acts 18:22).
- Collection visit (Acts 21:15–17).

(2) In Galatians, Paul records only two visits to Jerusalem:

- Conversion visit (Gal 1:18–20). This corresponds with the account in Acts 9:26–30.
- Private Meeting visit (Gal 2:1–10). Now we come to the main difficulty—which visit is this?

(3) Proposed Solutions.

(a) Solution 1: Galatians 2:1–10 is Luke's third visit (Jerusalem Council) recorded in Acts 15:1–29, with the famine visit of Acts 11:27–30 left unmentioned by Paul in Galatians. This is the traditional view that held sway virtually unchallenged until the early twentieth century. This view allows for either an early or late date.

- (i) This view has to answer the following questions: Why did Paul fail to mention a visit to Jerusalem in his autobiographical presentation? Why did Paul not mention the decision of the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 in his letter to the Galatians? Why did Peter feel so pressured by the Jewish circumcision party at Syrian Antioch after the Council had just ruled on the issue?

(b) Solution 2: Galatians 2:1–10 is Luke's second visit (Famine Visit) recorded in Acts 11:27–30, with the Jerusalem Council visit of Acts 15 taking place after Galatians was written. Main proponents

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<sup>8</sup> Schreiner, 28.

include: Ramsay, Bruce, George, Guthrie, Longenecker. This view obviously places an early date on Galatians making it Paul's first epistle (AD 48).

- (i) In this view the time spans of Galatians 1:18 and 2:1 are understood to be concurrent rather than consecutive (i.e., three years after conversion and fourteen years after conversion). In my opinion, this solution is the better of the two.<sup>9</sup> See the table below for a summary of the chronology for Galatians:

Galatians	Event	Acts	Event
1:15–17	Paul's Conversion	9:1–25	Paul's Conversion
1:18–20	First Jerusalem Visit	9:26–30	With Barnabas in Jerusalem
2:1–10	Private Meeting Visit	11:27–30	Famine Visit
2:11–14	Dispute in Antioch	15:1–2	Dispute in Antioch
---	Paul writes Galatians	---	---
---	---	15:3–29	Jerusalem Council Visit
---	---	18:22	Hasty Visit
---	---	21:15–17	Collection Visit

<sup>9</sup> Stanley D. Toussaint, "The Chronological Problem of Galatians 2:1–10", *Bibliotheca Sacra* 120.480 (1963): 335–340.