

# OpenTheo

## Galatians 1:11 - 2:21



### Galatians - Steve Gregg

In this Biblical text, Steve Gregg examines Galatians 1:11 - 2:21 to explore the charge that the Apostle Paul modified his behavior and message to please different audiences. Gregg argues that while there may have been some flexibility in behavior, Paul's teaching of the gospel remained consistent and could not be modified to please various audiences. Additionally, Gregg discusses the importance of direct revelation from God and how it impacted Paul's preaching. He also delves into a controversy surrounding whether or not Christian Jews could eat with uncircumcised Gentile Christians, ultimately emphasizing the need to live by faith rather than by law.

### Transcript

Galatians 1.1 Introduction We'll now turn to Galatians chapter 1 and verse 11. In our previous class on Galatians, we had an introduction that took up about half of our session, talking about the background and the location and the time and so forth related to the writing of the book. We got up through verse 10 and it is at verse 11 that a major change happens.

In fact, it is a very natural stopping point. We didn't just stop at verse 10 because we ran out of time, but because that's a very natural place to stop. At this point, Paul begins to relate his background, and he does so all the way through chapter 2 as well.

Especially up through chapter 2, verse 10, but even verses 11-21, the rest of chapter 2, is storytelling. Paul, in some of his letters, especially his shorter letters, divides the letters almost equally, sometimes exactly equally, between theological and practical information. For example, the book of Colossians has only four chapters.

The first two chapters of Colossians are theological. They have doctrinal information that Paul gives, and then the latter two chapters, chapters 3 and 4, are practical applications of those doctrines. Now that you believe these things, here's what you should do about them.

Ephesians is similar, but though it's a little longer, Ephesians has six chapters. The first three chapters of Ephesians are theological, and the last three are practical instructions.

Romans is not divided exactly in half.

There's a larger portion of Romans given over to the theological aspects up through chapter 11, but after chapter 11, chapters 12-15, I know there are 16 chapters, but there's not much in chapter 15, but I guess we'd say 12-16 are practical. In Galatians, we have also the practical and theological portions of the book, but there's another portion. Actually, Galatians has six chapters, and the first two are autobiographical.

Then you have two chapters that are theological, and then two that are practical. So there's an additional element in the Galatians epistle that is not found in many of the others, and there is more autobiographical information in Galatians than we find in any of the other epistles of Paul or any other writer, for that matter. I should say a larger percentage is given to it.

I haven't counted them, but in 2 Corinthians, if you count up all the verses where Paul said something about his life, you might have more verses than you have in Galatians. I'm not sure. But a larger portion of the book of Galatians than the percentage of any other book is given to this subject matter, and that is because Paul apparently had to answer misinformation that had been, or I should say disinformation that had been spread around about him.

He had to clarify. He had to set the record straight because, as we deduce for reasons given in our first session, there was some suggesting that Paul was only a second-hand disciple. He was not an apostle like Peter and the others were who had had direct contact with Jesus.

He came along later, and if anything, he had a derived position, derived from other men, not from direct contact with Christ. He refutes this, but that seems to be one of the things that was argued against him. Another thing that was suggested, it would appear, is that he had a tendency to change his message to please people, and that was not true.

Of course, we mentioned that Paul did change his habits at times to please people, and he even said so. He admitted this in 1 Corinthians 9. He said to those who are under the law, he can live as one under the law, and to those who are not under the law, he can live as one who is not under the law. He becomes all things to all men, so that by all means, he says, by any means, I might save some.

Paul is not ashamed of the fact that he modifies his behavior for different audiences, but he does not extend his flexibility to a modification of his teaching or of his gospel. This was what was being charged, the second thing that was being charged, that he modified the actual contents and mandates of the gospel to please various audiences, and that was, of course, not true. Also, it would appear that some were saying that he did not have the full endorsement of the apostles in Jerusalem.

Now, in order to answer these charges, he had to talk about himself more, because people were talking about him and saying the wrong thing. It is one thing to just trust your reputation in the hands of God, if all that is at stake is your reputation. It is probably a very humble and meek thing to do, if when people falsely accuse you, you just say, well, I will let God be my defender, I will not answer, even though the accusations are false.

But Paul had more at stake than that. It was not just his reputation, it was the whole integrity of his message, the validity of his message. Paul was the man who was most associated in the public mind with the gospel of grace.

Now, I am not saying that Peter and those guys did not preach a gospel that had grace in it, but Paul understood, apparently to a higher degree than many Jewish Christians did in Jerusalem, that Jewishness was something different than Christianity, and you did not have to mix them, in fact, you could not. One covenant had to go in order for another one to replace it, and yet many of the Jewish Christians were still mixing the two. They had Jesus and the law, Jesus and the old covenant, and Paul seemed to be way ahead of his time on this, and he had a reputation for it, and if Paul could be discredited as a person, if his integrity could be called into question, that would go a long way toward discrediting the gospel he preached.

We can see that Paul was able to be gracious at times, certainly most times, toward those who opposed him, but there were times when he had no tolerance at all for them. In 2 Timothy, for example, this just came to mind, so I'll turn you there before we start with Galatians, but in 2 Timothy chapter 4, Paul said in verse 14, 2 Timothy 4.14, and I'd like to read three verses altogether. Paul says, Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

May the Lord repay him according to his works. That's not well-wishing. That's wishing him to suffer at the hands of God for what he did.

You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. At my first defense, that is when Paul first stood before Nero, no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

Now, that statement, may it not be charged against them, is an echo of what Stephen said, and Paul was a witness of that prior to his conversion. When Stephen was there, he said, do not lay this sin to their charge. Paul says something very similar to what he heard Stephen say.

Prior to his own conversion, he heard Stephen say this, and now he says it of those that have betrayed him and left him, who should have stood by him in his hour of need. He doesn't hold it against them. But notice the difference in his attitude.

Between those who forsook him, and let him down when he needed them most, may the Lord not charge them with this. May God not hold this against them, he says. But toward Alexander, who did me much harm, he says, may the Lord repay him according to his works.

He wishes evil on Alexander, but not on these who have forsaken him when he needed them. Why? Well, because Alexander stands out from the others in terms that are described in verse 15. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

If it's just Paul who's been victimized, he can handle that. He doesn't wish God to judge those who mistreat him, and that's as far as it goes. But those who mistreat him because they withstand his words, because they hope by discrediting him, they can discredit his gospel, that gets Paul fighting.

Paul's willing to fight for his reputation when the gospel is at stake. Paul took many beatings in his travels. According to 2 Corinthians 11, he took many beatings with apparently not pleading his Roman citizenship privileges.

But there were times when he did plead his Roman citizenship privileges, at times when the gospel itself had to be vindicated. And you'll remember in Philippi in particular, he'd been arrested and beaten publicly, put in prison. The next day, they wanted to let him loose.

He said, I'm not going. You have beaten me, and I have Roman citizenship. You're not allowed to do that.

You're in trouble. The only way I'll let you off the hook is if you take me out and publicly vindicate me in front of everybody. Why? He didn't always do this.

Why did he do it that time? Because the gospel had been publicly disgraced the day before by these officials. He said, I'm not leaving town quietly until you vindicate me and my message and point out that I've done nothing wrong. This way, although Paul did agree to leave, he would leave behind a better environment for the gospel, rather than one where the last anyone heard, people get thrown in jail for preaching the gospel.

When the gospel is publicly vindicated, then he can be satisfied and leave as they wish for him to do. So Paul does defend himself at times. He does talk about himself at times, but never just to get back at people or just to keep himself from suffering dishonor or whatever.

But he does so because the gospel is at stake, and so much of it was tied in with him, who he was. Likewise, in Galatians, his critics were criticizing his gospel basically by criticizing him, making these accusations against him which were not true. So in order to reestablish a credible footing for the gospel among the Galatians, he had to point out

that the charges were false, since these charges were leveled not so much against him as what he was saying.

Verse 11 is where he begins. He says, But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, this emphatic statement, that I didn't get this message from man, appears to be answering one of the charges that he is just a second-hand apostle. Whatever he has, he got from someone else, from other people. He is not like Peter and those who saw Jesus himself.

But he is a man who just derived it second-hand from other people. He says, Not so. The gospel I preached, I didn't get.

I wasn't instructed by people about this. I got it straight by revelation from God. He has emphasized something similar to that in the opening verse of the book.

In verse 20, he says, I am an apostle not from man, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father. This is not a human-derived gospel or ministry that I have got here. It is from God directly.

Verse 13, For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. Now, there are two things that Paul mentions that have to do with his zeal in his former pre-Christian life.

One, he was so zealous that he exceeded others of his generation in zeal for the traditions of their fathers. That would be the rabbinic traditions, the things that later became part of the Talmud. He was a rabbinic student under Gamaliel, and he apparently was at the top of his class.

He exceeded others of his generation in his study and loyalty to and zeal for the traditions of the elders. He also mentions that this zeal extended so far as to persecute the church, even when others were not actively doing so. We don't read of a whole group of people being sent out by the Sanhedrin to persecute the Christians.

Paul himself seems to be self-appointed, and then eventually he goes to the chief priests and gets from them letters to go to Damascus to do the same. He sees his persecution of the church in former times as a mark of his zeal for Judaism. He says, you've heard about my reputation and my conduct when I was in Judaism.

Now, why does he emphasize this? Why is that important? Well, simply because he has been accused of opposing Judaism. He teaches that people do not have to keep the

Jewish law. They don't have to be circumcised.

The Gentiles do not have to become proselytes of the Jewish religion in order to be saved as Christians. This is very out of character for him in view of his past. In the past, he would have been very zealous for these things.

He would have imposed the law on everybody he could. What he's trying to point out is that the gospel he preaches, which is a gospel omitting any requirement of circumcision, is not something he would have thought of himself. It goes right against his nature, right against the way he was trained, right against the way he publicly acquitted himself to be a zeal-driven advocate of the law.

He's trying to say, listen, you explain it. Where did I get this message if it wasn't from God? It didn't come from my own breast. It wasn't what I was feeling.

It wasn't my own inclinations. I was all the other way. Now, by the way, in mentioning that he, in verse 13, that he persecuted the church of God beyond measure, he doesn't state in this place his remorse over that fact.

Because it's not his point to talk about what he did wrong, but basically he's presenting this to the Jewish mind. The Jews who are still persecuting Christians would see him as a hero in that. He's trying to say, listen, I was a Jew like you.

I was zealous. He's not stating at this point how remorseful he is, although on other occasions he certainly did. In 1 Corinthians 15, in verse 9, Paul said, For I am the least of the apostles.

I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. So, I mean, he was deeply broken over this. And he said, man, God called me an apostle, but I am totally unworthy of that calling.

I mean, in light of what I did before I was saved, when I persecuted the church, that is just, it's just incredible that God would ever make me an apostle. I'm so unworthy. In 1 Timothy 1.13, he speaks of this again.

In 1 Timothy 1, verse 13, he says, Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, and I obtained, he says, I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. Now, he mentions himself having been a persecutor before, and a blasphemer. Now, obviously he's not stating it in a positive light here.

He doesn't expect Timothy to see his former career as a persecutor as a positive thing. So, when Paul speaks, you know, in his heart about this, his memory of being a persecutor of the church is a very, it gave him great grief. To the Galatians, though, who were very much influenced by Jewish detractors, he is pointing out this should be something that they should be pleased about, in a sense.

I mean, he was so zealous for Judaism that he persecuted what he viewed as a heresy of Judaism. Now, he says in verse 14, Galatians 1.14, that he advanced beyond many of his contemporaries in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. There are other places where Paul is emphatic about how his credentials as a Jew, and as a zealous Jew, were certainly the principal defining trait of his pre-Christian life.

In Philippians 3, for example, in Philippians 3, beginning with verse 4, he says, Though I also might have confidence in the flesh, if anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so circumcise the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, concerning the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But how does he feel about that now? In verse 7, he says, But what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. For indeed, I also count all things lost for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish that I might gain Christ.

Now, he talks about how before he was a Christian, he was blameless in the law, zealous for Judaism to the point of persecuting the church. This is something that comes up frequently in Paul's self-description of his past. In Acts 22, verses 3-5, Paul is standing on the steps of the Roman fortress Antonio, which is in Jerusalem, actually.

And he's about ready to be taken up into protective custody by the Romans, but he asks for an opportunity to address the crowds, and so he does. And here's how he begins his address. In Acts 22, verse 3, he says, I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, to be brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our father's law, was zealous toward God, as you all are today.

I persecuted this way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains, even those who were there to Jerusalem, to be punished. Now, this again is another instance of him referring to his zeal in Judaism, in a sense, in the eyes of Jews, a boast, and even mentioning in each of these cases his persecution of the church as part of a boast. But, of course, in Philippians he points out that that which was a boast to me, that is, it's rubbish to me now, it's worthless, it's worse than worthless.

And so, he brings it up here in Galatians in order to remind his Jewish detractors that, hey, it's not like he was born with some kind of obsession about destroying Judaism. It's not like his present gospel of not requiring circumcision to be saved, it somehow is in character with the rest of his earlier life, and it would be a natural prediction that such a guy as a child, being rebellious against Judaism, would turn out to preach some kind of a message that would be anti-law. Far from it.

If you'd known me before I was converted, you would have thought that I'd be the most zealous advocate of circumcision of Gentiles and everyone else. But, he says, where do you think this came from? It didn't come from me, it was revealed to me by Jesus Christ. He's referring to the fact that if he had not met Christ on the road to Damascus, if he had not had a supernatural revelation of the gospel, he would never have come up with these ideas on his own.

Now, verse 15, But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach in him, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus. Now, Paul speaks of his conversion, in verse 16, as God choosing to reveal his Son in me. But his conversion, he says, was not the first choice God made.

In verse 15, it says, God separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace. Separated me from the womb. Now, by the way, Paul, there is no record in Acts or anywhere else of God specifically saying to Paul, I've chosen you from your mother's womb.

Unless God specifically said that thing to him on some unrecorded occasion, we have to assume that Paul just assumed it. That is, and correctly, that all people, God has a choice of their vocation for them from the womb. Now, that may not always result in their reaching God's will for their life.

The Bible says in Luke 7 that the Pharisees rejected the will of God for them. It specifically says that, and it is possible for people to reject the will of God for them, apparently, because the Bible speaks of people doing just that. But Paul recognizes that what he became was the will of God for him even prior to his birth.

God had a plan for his life. In Jeremiah 1, God said to the prophet upon his first contact with him directly, when God first revealed himself to Jeremiah, he said in Jeremiah 1.5, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I sanctified you, I set you apart and ordained you a prophet to the nations.

So, Jeremiah, even before he was born, was ordained to be a prophet. That's Jeremiah 1.5. It's in Luke 7. I didn't give you a verse number because I frankly don't remember the verse number. I might be able to find it just at a glance over the chapter.

But it says there, it's verse 30, Luke 7.30, that the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the new King James and King James as the counsel of God for themselves. So, the word counsel there, bole in the Greek, means the will of God. It's used elsewhere, for example, in Ephesians 1.11, where it says, God who works all things according to the counsel of his own will.



The word will there is the same Greek word that's here. Unfortunately, translated the counsel of God. But if consistently translated, it would say, the lawyers and Pharisees rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by John.

Yes, that's the new King James as counsel, right? Oh, yours says will? I've got the new King James as counsel. So, it must be, there are different new King Jameses. There are revisions of it from different years.

So, some of you might have an addition from a different year than mine. Mine says counsel of God, which is also like the King James. Perhaps in a later revision, they changed it to the will of God, which is proper.

Okay, great. Let's move along then. So, Paul indicated that when people are called to ministry, it's not a call that God thinks up at the last minute after they're converted.

He had that in mind for them before they're born. I mean, it's quite clear, since every Christian has a ministry of sorts, every person who is a Christian is a member of the body of Christ with a unique contribution to offer, and that being a ministry, that since the body of Christ and all of its functions were in God's mind from the very beginning, that the particular function you have or will have was in God's mind from the beginning also. I mean, Paul, his ministry as an apostle was simply his function in the body of Christ.

You have a function also. And if God had this function laid out from the beginning of the world, we have every reason to extrapolate that each of the functions, each of the members of the body of Christ and their particular unique contribution was in God's mind before the foundation of the world, which means that when you were born, although you didn't know it, and maybe you might have even reached your adult years before you knew God, yet God not only knew you, but caused you to be born for a purpose. This, by the way, is one of several things in the Bible that would indicate that people are never born by accident, that the conception of a child is never simply a matter of biological processes and nothing more than that is involved.

If it were possible for humans to create humans without God's will, then there might be people walking the planet, even those who have since been converted, who, they were an accident. They weren't planned by God. They shouldn't have ever existed.

But actually, the fact that God knew you from your mother's womb and had a plan for your life suggests that you came to exist in your mother's womb because of that plan. And there are not any accidents on here. Having expressed that biblical truth on some occasions in the past, people said, well, what about people who were conceived out of wedlock? What about people who were conceived in sinful circumstances? Was that the will of God? Well, I can't say that the sinful circumstances were the will of God, but God certainly could have prevented conception.

God can work through sinful circumstances to bring about something that he could have accomplished some other way or maybe would have preferred to accomplish some other way. But even those who were conceived out of wedlock, conceived through sin, those persons exist because God wants them to exist. And while it might boggle the mind to think, well, how could God have wanted me to exist when my whole existence came about through sin? Well, how could God have wanted Joseph in Egypt when it required the sin of his brothers to take him there? I mean, it's the same kind of thing.

God works through sin in spite of sin. It doesn't mean that he approves of the sin, but he is sovereign and he gets his results, whether it was through sin or through obedience. Men cannot thwart God's purposes and you would have come into being.

If you came into being through the means I just described, if those means had not been followed, God would have brought you into being some other way because he had a plan for your existence, an eternal purpose for your life. Paul recognized that. God separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace.

And when it pleased that God to do that, to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles. Now, the latter part of verse 15, he says, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. Now, why should he even mention this? But to answer the disinformation that said that he basically derived his message secondhand, like anyone else who'd never seen Jesus, they had to learn from the apostles and Paul heard what they had to say, but he didn't get his information firsthand.

He says, no, I didn't even go see them. I didn't confer with people. I got a direct revelation from Jesus and it was a long time before I ever conferred with these men about anything.

And I had been preaching all the time since. He says, instead of immediately going down to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, which might have seemed like a reasonable thing to do. I mean, I'm a new convert.

I'm called to be a minister. I might as well go enroll in the seminary and be apostles in Jerusalem. But I didn't.

God didn't call me to do that. Instead, I went totally the other direction. He says, I went to Arabia and then later I returned to Damascus.

Now, in harmonizing this with Acts chapter 9, which tells of Paul's conversion and early experiences as a Christian, Acts 9, 23 through 25, pretty much correspond with this, though, actually, in Acts 9, verse 20, it speaks of Paul's ministry immediately after his conversion. Acts 9, 20, he was converted in Damascus, or on the road there. He was baptized in Damascus and verse 20 says, immediately, Acts 9, 20, immediately he

preached the Christ in the synagogue that he is the Son of God.

So he's already preaching. He hasn't talked to the apostles yet. He's got a message, but he didn't get it from them.

Then all who heard were amazed and said, is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now, Acts does not mention any gap here or any movement of Paul, but he's telling about a plot to kill him in Damascus, which led to his escaping through a window in the wall in a basket. And this, there was apparently Galatians supplement between verse 22 and 23 here, between Acts 9, 22 and the next verse.

We must have Paul going to Arabia. And the reason for that, the reason we must have that, if you try to hold two things in your mind at the same time, Acts 9 and Galatians 1, is that in Acts 9, verses 23 through 25, we have Paul's escape from Damascus and his going then to Jerusalem. After he escaped from Damascus, he went to Jerusalem.

Well, if you consider, Galatians says that after he was saved, he didn't go right to Jerusalem. He went to Arabia first and then returned to Damascus. And then, verse 18, Galatians 1, 18, after three years, I went to Jerusalem.

So, in Acts chapter 9, we have the story of his escape from Damascus and his going down to Jerusalem. In Galatians, we learn that was three years after his conversion. Before he did that, he went away to Arabia and came back to Damascus.

His first place that he preached as a born again Christian was Damascus, but he left there, went to Arabia for who knows what for and what period of time, then came back to Damascus and when he returned to Damascus, he found this opposition, this plot on his life, which made him escape through the window and go to Jerusalem. So, there is a three year period there, not mentioned in Acts, but it belongs apparently between Acts 9.22 and 9.23. There is a gap of three years there, during which time Paul went to Arabia and then came back to Damascus. I belabor this because I find that historically, people have a hard time putting it into books, but hopefully after I have belabored it in several different ways, it is clear.

So, Galatians actually supplements Acts for us here. Back to Galatians 1, verse 18. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days.

Now, that meeting with Peter is recorded in Acts 9. In Acts 9, we read that he went and the apostles were afraid of him. Barnabas, however, allayed their fears and introduced him to them and they received him. He went in and out among them for a period of time.

Acts does not say how long this first visit to Jerusalem was, although Paul tells us here in Galatians it was fifteen days, just two weeks. He did not plot against his life. The brethren sent him off, sent him away.

Now, again, Acts does not give us any clues as to how many of the apostles were there when he met them or how long it was, but Paul tells us about that same visit here. He says he went to see Peter and remained there fifteen days. Verse 19 says, but I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

So, actually where Galatians, I mean Acts 9, I don't know, might have been out of town preaching or just busy. And so, probably not just busy because something as significant as Saul of Tarsus, the former persecutor, coming to town as a Christian would be something all those apostles would be curious about. They must have been out of town at that time.

After all, it was three years after Paul's conversion that his first visit, Paul stayed for about two weeks and met two of the apostles. Now, one thing interesting about verse 19 is that it says, I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. The reason that's interesting is that he indicates that James, the Lord's brother, was an apostle.

Except for Peter, I didn't see any other apostles except James. Well, when you read of Peter, James, and John, not James as the son of Zebedee, those three were the inner circle with Christ. There's also another James, the less, who was one of the disciples, one of the twelve.

But this James, the brother of Jesus, is neither of them. This is yet another James who is not among the twelve. He was not one of the twelve apostles.

This was, who is usually referred to by the church fathers, and he was actually the Lord's half-brother. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. Grew up in the home with Jesus.

We read of him in the various places in the Gospels that mention by name Jesus' brothers and sisters. James is listed always first as the brother of Jesus. I guess I could give you a reference for that.

One place we read of it is Matthew 13. It's also in Mark. But just to give you one instance, in Matthew 13, when Jesus was preaching in his hometown of Nazareth, the locals said, in verse 55, Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? Now, James here was recognized by the people of Nazareth as Jesus' brother.

Josephus, who was no Christian and didn't even read the Bible as far as we know, actually mentioned the death of this James, the Lord's brother, James, the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ. James had enough of a reputation in Jerusalem where

Josephus grew up, because Josephus grew up in Jerusalem at the very time the apostles were preaching there. Born there in 35 AD, therefore, throughout his entire childhood, Peter and these guys were preaching publicly in the streets, probably while Josephus was growing up.

So he knew about James, the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ. And that's what James has mentioned here. What's interesting and important is that he is here called by Peter, I mean, by Paul, he's called an apostle like Peter.

So that tells us, if nothing else, that there are additional apostles to the Twelve. Now, we would have known that anyway since Paul was an apostle and he was not one of the Twelve. Barnabas is also called an apostle.

By extension, Silas and Timothy and Titus are elsewhere seemingly referred to as apostles. And a lot of people seem to be called apostles, not a limitless number, but certainly more than the Twelve. Here we read that James was an apostle.

And the reason that is, I guess, a practical significance to us is that that James wrote the book of James. And one of the things that makes a book of the New Testament worthy of inclusion is its apostolic authority. James, who wrote the book of James, is this James, the Lord's brother.

And because of that, his book is apostolic. So, of course, James would be an apostle. This same James later became sort of the recognized leader of the church in Jerusalem after Peter was out of town.

So, Paul met with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem, but not the other apostles. Now, his mention in verses 18 and 19 here is that he didn't meet very many apostles and he was only there a short time. No doubt these details are emphasized in order to point out how little he could have gotten from them.

He didn't get his theology laid out systematically by them. He was only there for 15 days. These were busy men.

They didn't just spend the whole time, 24 hours a day, indoctrinating him. He had but limited contact with them and he was only a few of them on that occasion. So his emphasis is on how little he had seen the apostles in the early days of his ministry.

Now, by the time he wrote Galatians, he had seen them additionally, but he's trying to point out that he certainly had no opportunity to derive it from contact with the apostles. Verse 20 says, Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed before God, I do not lie. So, you know, he seems he seems to sense that what he's saying will seem so extraordinary that people might think he's lying.

What? You were a Christian for three years and never bothered to go see Peter and the

apostles? Hardly sounds realistic. Anyone would go see them. Afterward, I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

Now, that is, after those 15 days in Jerusalem, he left the regions of Syria and Cilicia. The Book of Acts records in Acts 9 that this departure from Jerusalem and his going away to these regions was because of a plot that was on his life that was discovered. And so the brethren sent him for his own safety out of town.

They, however, probably would not have been able to do that because Paul is a stubborn guy, and even the brethren couldn't persuade him to do things for his own safety. We find this later in the Book of Acts when everyone is saying he's going to be bound with chains and so forth when he goes to Jerusalem. He said, OK, I'm going to go anyway.

Well, he didn't count his own life dear. And the brethren could hardly have induced him to leave Jerusalem just on the fact that they knew the threats against his life. But there was something else.

In Acts 22, verses 17 through 21, Acts 22, 17 through 21, Paul is retelling his story of this very visit to Jerusalem. And he mentions that he was in the temple praying and the Lord appeared to him and told him to leave town because they would try to kill him there. They would not receive his testimony.

He said, no, Lord, I'm sure they'll receive it. They know about my past. I'm just the guy to evangelize this group.

And he said, no, they won't. I'm sending you to the Gentiles. Leave town.

So because he actually received direct revelation from Christ to leave town, it says that he left. In Acts 9, it is mentioned there was a plot of his life. And in Acts 22, it mentions that he received a revelation from Christ while he was praying in the temple to leave.

And so he did. Now, it says here he went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. In the book of Acts, chapter 9, it tells us that he went first of all off to Tarsus.

That was his hometown where he was born. Tarsus was in Cilicia. So that's one of the two places that Tarsus belonged to.

And so this agrees with Acts 9 where it says they sent him off to Tarsus. That's Cilicia. Later in Acts, chapter 11, some churches in Syria are started, including the one in Antioch.

And Barnabas goes off to Tarsus and finds Saul, or Saul as he was still being called in those days, and brings him to Antioch. And there he and Saul continued in the church in Antioch, which is in Syria, to the council. So this brings us up to date.

Paul mentions them in reverse order when he says Syria and Cilicia. Actually he went to

Cilicia and then Syria. But the mention of Cilicia refers to his going home to Tarsus, probably to see his family, probably to evangelize his parents and relatives.

We know he had a sister because she had a son who delivered him on one occasion from a plot of the Jews. So he did have family members. And he probably went back to Tarsus to lead and establish the church in Antioch there.

So this all hooks together. I had a pastor from Germany where everyone is taught liberalism, because Germany is where liberalism comes from in Christianity, Christian liberalism generated from German seminaries. And this man was an evangelical but very affected by liberal training.

He came to our school as a student on sabbatical from pastoral work. And he told me, quite frankly, he says, you cannot harmonize Galatians 1 and Acts 9. They just contradict each other hopelessly. I said, sorry, I don't see it that way.

I don't see any problem. It's true they give different information, but not contradictory information. I've just shown, I think, how actually they give the same story.

They just supply different details in different places, in the different passages. Verse 22, I was unknown by faith to the churches of Judea, all of which were in Christ, but they were hearing only. He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy, and they glorify God in me or because of me.

Now, what he's saying here is that when he left Jerusalem and went off to Syria and Cilicia, he left having had only extremely limited contact with the Jewish churches. The other churches of Judea, other than the one in Jerusalem, they'd never seen his face. He was unknown by faith to them.

They had, of course, heard of his reputation, but they'd had no direct contact with him, which is another way of saying I didn't get anything from them either. I didn't have any contact with them. How could I have derived anything I'm saying from the Jewish sector of the church when, in fact, they didn't even see me until 14 years after this? Now, that brings us to chapter 2. Then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and also took Titus with me.

And I went up by revelation and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run or had run in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth in the hope that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we did not yield subjection or submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

But from those who seemed to be something, whatever they were, it makes no

difference to me. God shows partiality, personal favor to me. For those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter, for he who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship of circumcision also worked effectively toward the Gentiles, and when James, Cephas, that's Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Now, we'll look at this piece by piece, but I wanted to read the whole thing because in determining some of the basic questions related to this passage, we need to bring in data from the whole section we just read, so I wanted to see it all at once. After 14 years, he says in verse 1, now there's been some dispute as to whether this means 14 years after his conversion or 14 years after the previous incident related.

Now, is this true, or was he 17 years old? Because the previous incident, he said in verse 18, was after three years. Now, I think there's very little question that can be sustained that what he means here is 17 years after his conversion. It's not a major thing that really a lot hangs on, but just so we'll understand what he's saying.

He means 14 years after his conversion. How do I know that? Because the expression 14 years after, or after 14 years, is very much like in chapter 1, verse 18, after three years. After what was those three years? After the previous thing.

Not after my conversion necessarily, possibly, but apparently after he returned to Damascus. Actually, it's not as clear as I wish it were, and it could be taken either way, and so could this, but I think most scholars believe that the first visit was three years after his conversion, and the second visit was 14 years after that. And this is all important to try to measure, first of all, when Paul was converted by tracing the number of years backward from some known incident, and also in determining which visit to Jerusalem we're reading about in chapter 2. This is something that we don't have certainty about, but the two theories, of course, about which visit to Jerusalem this was, are that it was either the Jerusalem Council visit, and it seems like an awful lot of commentators believe it was, that here in chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, he's talking about his visit to the Jerusalem Council, where they determined the question once and for all that it was a previous visit, mentioned in the 11th chapter of Acts, where Paul and Barabbas simply went down there to deliver some money, a gift from the Antioch church taken down to the Jerusalem church.

In Acts, we do not read of any other business transacted at that time. We read of them taking the money down, and that's all we read. So we don't know what else they may have done, at least from the book of Acts we don't know what else they may have done.

But I am of the opinion that Galatians 2 is about that famine relief visit recorded in Acts 11, and not about the Jerusalem Council visit, which is recorded in Acts 15. I gave my



reasons in the previous session, so I won't go into them in detail, but one thing I would say is Paul specifically says that this discussion over his gospel and so forth was conducted privately. That took place.

He says in verse 2, this was private. He said privately to those who were of reputation, and he means by that Peter, James, and John because he names them later on in verse 9. Okay, so I move on the assumption based on several factors I gave you in the introduction and also the fact that he speaks of a private meeting, but no public conference here, that he is talking here about details that Acts has left out concerning his famine relief visit in Acts chapter 11. So he says, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me.

Now, if someone would say, well, in Acts 11, it doesn't mention Titus going with them, so maybe that's not it. Well, I point out that in Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council doesn't mention Titus either. In fact, the book of Acts never mentions Titus.

Titus obviously traveled with them, but Acts doesn't mention him, which simply tells us there were a lot of, or some, traveling companions of Paul's that Acts omits reference to. So Titus went along, and the reason he did apparently, or maybe it wasn't the reason he did, but it came up incidentally, was that Titus was a Gentile convert, and he was not circumcised. So he was a, you know, he is a specimen of the product of Paul's ministry.

Paul and Barnabas had finished their first missionary journey, and, of course, they labored in a Gentile church in Antioch, where probably Titus was converted there, and so they were preaching a gospel that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised, and they brought a case in point with them. They brought Titus down as Exhibit A, perhaps because Titus was an exceptionally good example of a Christian young man. We know that this is the same Titus to whom later the book of Titus was written, and Titus was given something like apostolic authority by Paul to appoint elders in the churches and so forth, just like Paul and Barnabas had done.

Titus was told to appoint elders, and that's a rather apostolic kind of activity, and so Titus was eventually became quite a leader, an important authority figure in the church, but perhaps in his early years as a Christian, he exhibited already unusual traits of holiness and spirituality, and so Paul took him along because here's a good example of what God can do in the life of somebody who's not been circumcised, and this will be awfully hard for these Jerusalem Christians to say, no, this man is not really saved, because obviously his life would depict that he was. So he took Titus along, and I went up by revelation. Now, this too seems to point to the famine relief visit rather than the Jerusalem Council visit.

In Acts 15, when it talks about the Jerusalem Council, it does not mention anything about a revelation being the cause of his going there. He was in dispute. He embarks on a dispute with certain Judaizers, and they just decided, well, we'd better go to Jerusalem

and sort this out with the apostles.

That's what happened in Acts 15, but in Acts 11, you will recall, Agabus, a prophet, had come to Antioch, and he prophesied by revelation that there was going to be a famine, which they knew would affect the Jerusalem church, and because of that revelation, the church decided to send money down to the church in Jerusalem by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. So, that would fit much better. He said, I went down by revelation.

Some translations actually would say because of a revelation, and certainly that applies to Acts 11, the famine relief visit. It does not apply very naturally to the other option. And because of that revelation, Paul and Barnabas went with the gift to Jerusalem.

So, that again seems to point that direction. So, I went up by revelation and communicated, or because of a revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately. He didn't go out there and preach it on the streets in Jerusalem.

He wanted to make sure he had the approval of the other apostles. He said privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run or had run in vain. Now, when he says, lest I might run or had run in vain, he suggests that if the apostles didn't approve, he might well have run in vain in preaching the gospel.

Now, does this mean that he wasn't sure enough of his gospel to know whether it was real or false, and he needed the apostles to tell him so he would know whether he had been preaching a false gospel or not? And if they hadn't approved, he would have to decide, well, I guess I've been preaching the wrong thing. I've been running in vain. I don't think so.

I mean, Paul is emphatic about this. He didn't get it from them. He didn't depend upon them.

His conferring with them was not to allay his suspicions that he might be preaching a false gospel, or it was not to you know, appease his curiosity about whether the gospel he was preaching was right, but he wasn't sure that they'd know it was right. He knew it was right, but he wasn't sure they'd approve. And if they didn't, that would cause serious problems.

Because if they hadn't gotten the same revelations he'd gotten about it, I mean, they were the bosses. This would cause a schism. This would cause a tremendous split in the church between the Jewish and the Gentile elements.

The Gentiles under Paul's leadership and the Jews under Peter's leadership. And he realized that the body of Christ would be seriously torn if the other apostles did not endorse what he was preaching. It would not, I think, have prevented him from preaching it.

But he wondered whether, you know, he was going to be in trouble with these guys or not. So he went to them privately and explained to them exactly the way he preaches it. He says, Yet not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Now, he does not say that some official declaration was made, like at the Jerusalem Council, that no Gentiles need be circumcised. He just says, I had a Gentile convert with me. He was uncircumcised and no one required him to be circumcised.

So this visit did not provide a decree, like the Jerusalem Council did, that freed all Gentiles, but it did provide a precedent. It was not a decree that came out of the visit, but a precedent. Here was a Gentile convert.

The apostles knew he was a Gentile, knew he was uncircumcised, and they never said anything about the need for him to be circumcised. So I guess they didn't disapprove. They must have approved this gospel.

He says, But this occurred. Now, in verse 4, the words, This occurred, are not in the Greek. They're in italics here.

Many people would supply different words. Some would say, This came up. The question of Titus being circumcised or not.

This issue was raised only because of some false brethren secretly brought in. That is to say, Titus was not in the final analysis required to be circumcised, but the issue did come up. And it came up only because certain false brethren raised it as an issue.

As a controversy. There were apparently some in the Jerusalem church at this meeting who were apostles. They were false brethren.

He could not be at this point referring to any of the apostles, of course. None of them were false brethren. Even if he had had a difference with any of them, he couldn't call them false brethren.

So there must have been others, advisors to the apostles, others who had the ear of the apostles who weren't, Paul considered them not even true Christians. He considered their gospel understanding was deficient. They were still under the law.

They had fallen from grace. They were not in there. But they were viewed as brethren.

They were counterfeit Christians, in Paul's judgment. But apparently the apostles in Jerusalem didn't recognize them as such, and they were among them as, you know, associates and brethren. And these false brethren raised the issue saying, hey, this Gentile here, you should circumcise him.

If you don't do that, you're undermining the law of Moses, you're undermining

circumcision, and so forth. But Paul says these people, they were brought in secretly. They came in by stealth to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.

Now, he says these people weren't really looking out for the kingdom of God. They were jealous of the liberty of these Gentiles. They were jealous that these Gentiles didn't have to keep the regimentations of the law, and they hoped to bring the Gentiles into the same bondage that the Jews were living under.

Though the Jews didn't need to live under it either if they were Christians, but they did. He says, they were looking to spy out our liberty to bring us into the same bondage they were in. He said, verse five, to whom, that is to these false brethren, we did not yield submission even for an hour, not for a moment.

We didn't let their objections go unanswered. We stood and resisted them so that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. That is so that the Gentiles might not have some altered form of the gospel, some perversion of the gospel as he referred to it in chapter one, verse nine, or verse, I should say, verse seven.

He wanted the gospel to stay true and unaltered, and it wouldn't have been had these false brethren prevailed in requiring Titus to be circumcised. That would have set a precedent that could then be argued on all the Gentiles. So Paul said, actually, the opposite precedent was set.

The apostles, because of our resistance to these false brethren, the apostles agreed with us. The apostles stood with us and stood with the gospel we preach rather than that of these false brethren who were opposing us. Verse six, But from those who seem to be something, now Paul seems to show a little disdain for the other apostles.

It might be, it might be a false impression we get, but it does sound that way. Those who seem to be something, he means Peter, James, and John as he points out in verse nine. Whatever they were, it makes no difference to me.

God shows personal favor to no man. Favoritism. For those who seem to be something, added nothing to me.

Now, why does Paul make that aside? I don't care who they are. God doesn't show personal favoritism. There's two views on this.

On one hand, what the seemingly obvious meaning would be is that Paul said, now, they have proved to me that I wouldn't care if they didn't. I don't care who they are. They're people.

They're just men. They may be impressive, and everyone may kowtow to them and so forth, but if they got the gospel wrong, I wouldn't care who they were. I'd still preach the

gospel to Jesus Christ.

Fortunately, he didn't have to make that decision. They did agree with him, but he's basically saying, hey, I want you to know I submitted to them, but not because I was in some sense subservient to them. It's not as if I was somehow dependent upon their approval.

I don't care who they are. They're just human beings like everyone else. Me too.

It's obeying God that matters, not obeying men. That's what he said. That's one view.

Some view him as saying something entirely different. When he says, I don't care what they were, whatever they were, it makes no difference. Some people think that he's referring back to what they were before they were saved.

These were fishermen, whereas he was a Pharisee and a rabbi. In other words, he's making the opposite kind of statement. You know, I respected these guys.

I don't care what they used to be. Or what I used to be. It doesn't matter.

God doesn't show favoritism. Sure, I was a rabbi. I was skilled in the law.

I was a lot wiser than them about these things. They were just untrained fishermen. But I don't hold that against them.

Whatever they were before, it doesn't matter. God won't favor me because I was a rabbi and disfavor them because they were fishermen. Some think that's what he's saying.

It's sort of like the opposite impression. Either he's saying, I don't care who they are now. They're just people.

And I obey God, not man. Which is what it sounds like. That's what he's saying.

Or else he's saying, hey, I wanted to honor these guys. Sure, they were just a bunch of converted fishermen. But that's okay.

Whatever they were back then, it doesn't matter. They're something now. They're apostles of Christ.

And so I wanted to defer to them. And sure, you could argue that I was a greater Jew than they were. Before, we were Christians.

But that was before. That was then. This is now.

They're Christians too now. God doesn't show favor to me because I was a rabbi and not to them. So, that's two ways of looking at it.

I honestly don't know which is the right way. But I guess I'm inclined to the first view since that's the first impression I got when I read it younger yesterday. Well, the question is, could he have been talking about the objectors, the false brethren? Well, I guess that is a possibility if those false brethren were leaders in the church because he's talking about those who seem to be something.

Well, maybe he means just who seem to be Christian. But I have the impression he's talking about people who seem to be something important because he later speaks of James and Peter and John in verse 9 as those who seem to be pillars. Now, I've always taken those who seem to be something are the same people who seem to be pillars.

And those are the those three top apostles. Now, in fact, that's how I think most would take it. But you raise an interesting point.

Maybe those who seem to be something are not the same ones who seem to be pillars. Maybe those who seem to be something are the false brethren. You know, they may be impressive to someone, not to me.

They fail to impress me. Maybe. That would be another good alternative it seems like.

Though something about his wording and the flow of his argument strikes me as equating those who seem to be pillars and those who seem to be something. Though I will admit there is a possibility it could mean what you suggested. That's not a bad suggestion.

Okay. But he says in verse 6 those at the end those who seem to be something added nothing to me. Now, he must be saying that in order to counter that criticism that he just got whatever he has from someone else.

No, they didn't add anything. Sure, I talked to them about it. I told them what I was preaching.

I didn't ask them what I should be preaching. I told them what I was preaching and they didn't add to it. They didn't say, okay, but add this to it, too.

Or add that to it. They approved. They endorsed what I was saying and they didn't even do so with any modifications or reservations.

They didn't add anything to it. But on the contrary, verse 7 when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter. Now, there's a long parenthesis here that breaks the sentence up and then he has to kind of start the sentence over again in verse 9 because he broke it up so badly in verse 8. But what he infers there or implies in verse 7 is that he, in fact, had a special apostleship to the Gentiles and that the other apostles had a special calling and sphere of calling to the Jewish people.

Now, of course, Jesus had told the twelve to go to all nations and disciple all nations and to preach the gospel to every creature. And that was a long time earlier than this. So, how could the twelve apostles who had heard Jesus say that, how could they assume that their mystery was principally to the uncircumcised or to the circumcised? Well, I'm not sure.

We don't have all their discussions and all their deliberations and so forth on record so we don't know exactly how they reasoned. But they may well have reasoned that since Jesus said to them, you twelve, in Matthew 19, he said, you twelve disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That Jesus was essentially designating the Israelites as their special sphere of authority and of activity.

So that even though Jesus could go into all the world and preach the gospel, there were Jews in all the world. That Peter and the others saw themselves as sort of heading up the Jewish mission wherever the Jews might be in any part of the world. And Peter did travel in Samaria and other places.

Even to Rome it would appear for that very purpose. But Paul was not going to the Jews alone, to the circumcised, but to the uncircumcised. Now were there two gospels? One for the circumcised, one for the uncircumcised? Probably not.

I would dare say not since Paul said if anyone preaches any other gospel let it be anathema. But among the Jews, the apostles who mentioned them didn't have to discuss the issue of circumcision. They were already circumcised.

They neither had to require it or tell them to not do it. The Jews were circumcised at eight days old and therefore by the time they heard the gospel the issue of should I be circumcised or not didn't even have to be discussed. So, there was a recognized division of activity between Paul and the other apostles.

He to the uncircumcised and they to the circumcised. Now in parenthesis he says, verse 8, For he who worked effectively in Peter, that is God, Jesus who worked in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised, referring to all those miracles that were done in Jerusalem through Peter in the early chapters of Acts. Tremendous things were done through Peter.

Well, the same God was doing the same kinds of things with me among the Gentiles, he says. That same one also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles. So the same anointing that was clearly upon Peter in his ministry among Jews was as clearly upon Paul in his ministry among the Gentiles.

All the same kind of miracles that Peter did, Paul did, only in a different sphere of activity. Now, picking up the sentence in verse 9 that he had started in verse 7 but broke into and lost his train of thought, he goes back and starts the sentence over again. And

when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace... See, that's parallel to verse 7 on the contrary.

When they saw that the gospel had been committed to me. Now they perceived the grace when they saw this. That having given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, which we would think of a right hand of fellowship to be like a handshake.

Men usually shake right hands with one another to strike a deal or to express partnership. The modern custom of shaking hands may not have existed back then. There may have been some other gesture.

But it was apparently with the use of the right hands. Maybe they grabbed each other at the elbows or something like that of each other's hands. I mean, I think the Romans did that kind of thing.

Did they not? At least in Ben-Hur I think they did. Ben-Hur is authentic, right? I mean, it was really... Didn't they do some research before they made that movie? I think they must have. Those chariot wheels look pretty authentic.

So, you remember in Ben-Hur how the guys, when they meet each other, they grab each other by the elbow like that? Maybe the Romans did that. Maybe that's the ancient way, sort of the ancient counterpart of shaking hands. I don't know.

But whatever it was, there was some gesture using the right hand by which partnership was expressed, which would be in principle very much like a handshake today. It might have even been a handshake. I'm not sure.

But he said, those guys gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they should go to the circumcised. So, what Paul is saying here is that although no official decision was made at this point because it was not yet the Jerusalem Council, there was sort of a private meeting with Peter and Barnabas and Titus on one side and Peter, James and John on the other. And there was no controversy really.

I mean, there was some controversy between Paul and the false brethren, but among himself and the other apostles, there was full endorsement. They didn't tell him what to preach. They didn't add to his message, but they endorsed him.

They viewed him as a partner. They actually recognized him as having a similar authority among the Gentile churches as Peter had among the Jewish churches. So, there's a recognition of Paul's apostleship here by Peter and his companions, but with very clear delegation of spheres.

One group goes to the Jews, one to the Gentiles. Now, whether Jesus really intended it to



be this way, that is, whether Jesus really only wanted Peter and the others to go to the Jews, we cannot say. I mean, I guess it might surprise us from what Jesus did say to them and give them the great commission that he really meant for them only to go to the Gentiles, to circumcise.

And they may have even come to understand it differently later on themselves. The Bible does not declare that the apostles were infallible in all their decisions. I mean, Peter made a lot of mistakes.

In fact, the next story in Galatians chapter 2, the rest of it, gives an example where Peter made a mistake. These men are not infallible, but at least they interpreted their mission this way initially that we'd have one group going after the Gentiles, one group going after the Jews. Whether they later crossed over, and I mean, Paul certainly preached in synagogues to Jews as well, and Peter preached in the household of Cornelius, a Gentile.

So, apparently it wasn't cast in stone that they couldn't cross over the boundaries racially. Verse 10, they desired only that we should remember the poor. In other words, they didn't add anything to our gospel.

The only even recommendation they made was they wanted to make sure we didn't forget the poor. And the poor means the poor in Jerusalem. The term the poor came to be used in the early church specifically of the poor in Judea, the Judean churches.

And that's what it meant here. Peter and James and John said, now, you're working among the Gentiles and we endorse you to that, but don't forget us here. We got needs here.

The church in Jerusalem has needs. Don't forget the poor here. And Paul said, oh, don't worry about that.

I'm eager to help the poor. I'm eager to help the church in Jerusalem. And Paul had demonstrated even on that very visit, because he just brought a gift down from Antioch for them.

He had in that very case exhibited concern for this, and Peter and the others said, now, please don't forget us. And you know what Paul never did in the remainder of his activities in the book of Acts, especially on his third missionary journey, and his second, too, I believe, he was going around collecting money from his own converts, his own Gentile churches, not for himself, but to take as a gift to the Jerusalem church. Paul was continually trying to maintain a peaceful relationship between himself and this other group, the Jewish Christians, who didn't trust him.

There's a volatile relationship there. And one of the ways that Paul tried to be a peacemaker was by continually showing tokens of his support for the Jewish church by bringing monies from the Gentile churches to the Jewish Christians. And he was eager to

do that, and he mentions it here.

But apart from asking him to remember the poor, that's the only concessions that the apostles ever put upon him or any mandate or recommendations that they made. So in relating this story, Paul is saying, listen, I saw the apostles so rarely, briefly, after three years, and then a little bit more intensively after another 14 years. But during that visit, same as the first, they didn't change anything, I didn't get anything from them.

Except an endorsement. And that's all that really happened. Now, verse 11 to the end of the chapter, another story set off in a different time frame.

We don't know when it occurred. It has to do with a time when Peter visited Antioch. Well, that was Paul and Barnabas' church.

This must have been before the Jerusalem Council, because this letter was written before the Jerusalem Council, and therefore, probably during the first year. Now, if we get the chronology right, if I'm not mistaken about when this was written, I don't see any other options than what I'm suggesting to fit everything together. Remember, Paul and Barnabas were, when Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch, it says in Acts 11, they stayed there a year.

Then they made the famine relief visit. And then the next we read, in chapter 13, Paul and Barnabas are sent off on their first missionary journey. They come back from that, and sometime during that time, a conflict arises, so they go down and have the Jerusalem Council.

Now, the Jerusalem Council had not yet happened, so this visit of Peter to Antioch had to be sometime before that. It couldn't have been during Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey, because Paul wouldn't have been in Antioch at that time to have this confrontation we're going to read about. So, it must have occurred, what we're about to read must have occurred either in that little space of time, well, let me give you one option.

It may have occurred in that little space of time when Paul and Barnabas had returned from their missionary journey and had not yet gone down for the Jerusalem Council. But I don't believe that can be the time frame for two reasons. One, that's the time he was writing this epistle.

Secondly, the reason he went down for the Jerusalem Council is because a strife arose in Antioch, and if Peter had been there at the time, then he could have settled it. There wouldn't have had to be a Jerusalem Council. If Peter happened to be in Antioch during that little while when the strife arose, after Paul and Barnabas had returned from their missionary journey, then he could have settled it.

I mean, anyone would listen to Peter in those days. Not everyone wanted to listen to

Paul, but everyone would listen to Peter. So, it seems to me the only remaining time frame for this to have occurred was that year, the first year that Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, when Barnabas had gone off to Tarsus, picked up Paul, brought him back, and they continued a year in Antioch.

Now, the famine relief visit had happened during that time, but it would appear that Peter's visit was after the famine relief visit, because he relates it here afterward, but before the first missionary journey. That could have been only presumably a matter of months. We don't read of this visit to Antioch on the part of Peter in the book of Acts.

We have only this reference to it in Galatians, nowhere else. So, let's read it and see what happened there. Verses 11 through 21.

But when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed. Now, when he had met Peter before, Peter didn't blame him, didn't change anything about him, didn't criticize him, just endorse him, but that doesn't mean that Paul is somehow a patsy for Peter, or some kind of a guy who just kowtows to Peter. Far from it.

If Peter steps over the line, Paul will rebuke him, too. It says, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles, which is okay.

Paul did, too. But when they came, men from James would be sent away from the Jerusalem church. Interesting.

James was that significant that anyone who came from the Jerusalem church had been sent by James. When they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Now, what's the difference between what Peter did here and what Paul himself said that he did? Among the Jews, he observes the law. Among the Gentiles, he doesn't observe the law. He doesn't want to offend people, so he can reach everybody.

Now, isn't that essentially what Peter was doing when he was with Gentiles? He ate with the Gentiles, which was okay. But when the Jews came, he didn't want to offend them, so he withdrew and didn't have table fellowship with the Gentiles, because the Jews would not approve of it. Sounds very much like following Paul's policy, but it wasn't.

It was different. And there was much more at stake. Paul would not alter his behavior if it would also alter the implications for the gospel.

What Peter was doing, essentially, was pleasing man. The very thing that some accuse Paul of doing. To the Gentiles, he acted like it didn't matter that they were

uncircumcised.

But when the Jews came, to whom it did matter, he acted as if it did matter. He withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentiles and only ate with the Jews. In doing so, he was making a public statement at a time where there was a tremendous atmosphere of controversy over this very issue.

Now, if there was no controversy, his actions might not have been so volatile, but this was at the very time where it had not been officially decided yet whether these Gentiles are acceptable to God in their uncircumcised state. There were still many Christians in Jerusalem who felt that the Gentiles might be part saved by being converted, but they had to be circumcised, too, to be really saved. And Jewish Christians, many of them, would still not eat at the same table with an uncircumcised Christian Gentile.

Because there was still an area of controversy here. Is this guy really saved or is he not? Is he a Jew? Is he a Gentile? Is he a Christian? What is he? And Peter had no personal problems with it when he came down there. After all, he had already been in the house of Cornelius.

He had already had that sheep vision with all those unclean animals. Peter had had all this happen before that in Acts chapter 10. Remember, we're equating the early part of Galatians 2 with Acts 11, what happened in Acts 11, but the Cornelius incident happened in Acts 10.

So, Peter already was kind of made more open to the Gentiles and so forth. And when he was there alone from Jerusalem, he had no problem treating the Gentiles like full brothers, eating at the table with them. He knew they weren't circumcised but it didn't matter to him.

But, a group of Christian Jews from Jerusalem came to whom it did matter. They were not convinced this was okay. And Peter feared them.

It's strange that he, the leader of the church, would fear them, but they came from James and by this time, James was apparently eclipsing Peter in Jerusalem church as an authority figure. And Peter was a bit intimidated by these people. He didn't want James and other Jewish Christians to think he was a compromiser and he just did the wrong thing.

He acted like it mattered and he separated himself from the Gentiles so that he wouldn't offend them. Now, this was not just a desire to avoid offense. It was a desire to avoid criticism.

And that's the difference. It's one thing that you act a certain way to avoid offending other people. It's another thing to act a certain way to avoid being criticized by people because of your fear of your reputation or whatever.

Now, this was particularly bad in view of the fact that the very issue of Gentile inclusion without circumcision was being discussed and debated and Peter's action was a tacit statement to the wrong side of that controversy. By implication, his actions indicated, yes, these Gentiles should be circumcised. I'm not eating with them since they're not.

And that was contrary to the gospel even as Peter understood it. But he was essentially making that statement. And because Peter was a big name, all the Jews who were with him also withdrew.

It must have been a big scene, y'all. For days or weeks, there's all this commingling of Jews and Gentile Christians in the church in Antioch having a great time fellowshiping. All of a sudden, a delegation from James comes up.

All the Jewish Christians say, we're going to eat over here. And the Gentiles eat over there. And the Gentiles sit by and say, wow, what are they saying? Are they saying that we're not okay now? You know, that just, I mean, are they saying, in fact, we do need to be circumcised? That's what it looked like.

And he said, even Barnabas got carried away with this. And Barnabas was one of the champions with Paul of the truth of the gospel in the previous story. And now, even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Verse 14, But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter, before them all, by the way, when one sins before all, they should be rebuked before all. There is such a thing as public accountability for public figures. If someone sins secretly, you go privately to them.

But Peter did this publicly. He was a public figure, and everybody needed to hear what Paul had to say to Peter to set the record straight. He said, If you being a Jew live in the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? It's a good question.

You're a Jew and you don't live like a Jew. Why would you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? What he's saying is, Peter, you know better than this. You know that you don't have to keep the law, and yet by your action you're implying that Gentiles do need to.

We who are Jews by nature, Paul continues, speaking to Peter, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is Christ therefore not? Is he a minister of sin? Certainly not.

For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives 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. I do not set aside the grace of God.

For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain. Well, there are many good points here. He points out, first of all, that Peter, not only is not acting according to the gospel, but not acting according to his own behavior at other times.

You ordinarily do not compel yourself to live under Jewish standards. But now your actions are going to give support to those who wish to compel Gentiles to live under Jewish standards. Now, he says, you and I are Jews by nature.

These Gentiles are not, but we are. And even we who are have realized that the law doesn't save anybody. And therefore, we've stopped trusting in the law and we now trust in Christ.

That we might be justified by faith in Christ, he says in verse 16. And he says at the end of that, for by the works of the law, no flesh should be justified. The law does not have the power to justify.

It only has the power to condemn. It requires the grace of God to justify. But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, verse 17, we ourselves become sinners.

Is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Now, I'm not sure why this fits in here. The quotation marks are arbitrary. There are no quotation marks in the Greek New Testament.

Therefore, the translators put quotation marks where they think they belong. Obviously, in the New King James, they believe that everything from verse 14 through verse 21 is within the quotation marks. As Paul's talking to Peter all the way through here.

However, one would be at liberty to put the end of the quote somewhere along the line here, wherever it made sense. Possibly, even at the end of verse 16. At the end of verse 16, that would be a possible place to end what Paul said to Peter.

And then, verses 17 through 21 would simply be Paul's commentary to the Galatians of his thinking about this. It's possible that we could understand it that way. Because then it would be saying, now listen Galatians, we're justified by faith, not God.

But let me clarify something to you. If we say we're justified by Christ and we go out and sin, then is Christ the minister of sin? Has Christ justified us simply to free us to go out and sin? Then Christ is promoting sin. God forbid, he says.

That's not the way it is. If I build again the things I once destroyed, I make a transgression of myself. That is, I once denounced, and depending on who he's talking to, Peter or the Galatians there, he could say, I once denounced my life of sin in

becoming a Christian.

Or if he's talking to Peter, I once denounced the law as a means of righteousness by becoming a Christian. In any case, if I restore it again, if I go back to the law, or if he's talking to the Galatians, if I go back to the life of sin while under Christ, I'm transgressing, I'm backtracking, I'm admitting that I was wrong in the first place and make myself a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, verse 19, that I might live to God.

When he says, through the law I died to the law, he goes into this in more detail in Romans 7, where he says, I was alive without the law once, meaning in his early childhood, apparently. He says, but when the law came, sin revived and I died. And the law, when it came, the commandment slew me.

It killed me. The law simply informed me of my guilt and that ruined my relationship with God when my conscience became condemned and I was spiritually dead. Now, apparently before that time, as an infant or as a child, he was spiritually alive, as I think all children are in their ignorance.

But when they become aware of the law, the law itself kills them. But in killing them, they've died to the law. And Jesus, he says, I have been crucified with Christ.

Now, if I've been crucified with Christ, then I've died. Not really, but I mean, in the person of Christ. In Christ, when he died, I died.

He, being my representative, died in my place and therefore it's as if I have died myself. And that being so, it's a wonderful thing because as a sinner, I deserved to die. I was under the penalty of death.

But fortunately, since I died with Christ, that's happened. I don't have to look forward to dying in the future. It's already happened.

The judgment has passed. It was in Christ. Christ took the judgment and as my representative, it's as if I took it when he did.

The judgment has passed for me. I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live.

I'm not living for myself or my own strength. It's Christ who is in me, who lives in me. I live by faith in him.

Now, living by faith in Christ means I'm trusting in him for my righteousness. I'm trusting in him for my ability to live pleasing to God. It's no longer in the flesh trying to keep God's rules.

Not any longer trying to follow standards like I did when I was a Jew. It's now just living by faith in Christ. And faith doesn't just mean the believing part, but the part of obeying

as well because faith without works is dead.

I have faith in Christ that produces behavior in me that is not sinful, nor is it legalistic. It is simply the work of faith in my life as I trust in him who loved me and gave himself for me. Now, verse 21 says, I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died and made it.

This is an amazing thing. If people say that they can be saved anyway without Christ through keeping good works or whatever, they're suggesting that Jesus died for nothing. If you could be saved some other way than for Jesus to die, then it sure was a dumb thing for him to come and die.

It makes God a very poor economist to pay so much for something that could have been obtained more cheaply. If you could have been saved without Jesus dying, what's the point of him dying? And what Paul is saying, Jesus died for nothing. If there was already another way available for people to be saved through the law, why did Jesus have to die? We couldn't be saved through the law.

That's the point. The very fact that Jesus died demonstrates that the law and all other means of salvation that men attempted prior didn't work. If men could be justified by works of the law, Jesus wouldn't have had to die.

He died in vain. But since we cannot assume that God would have had Jesus die for nothing, this testifies that no form of salvation was open to man or available to man prior to Jesus' coming, and Jesus' death was the only thing available. Now, this, of course, means the law never helped.

It never justified anyone, and that's the point Paul's making. He'll develop this further in chapters 3 and 4.