

Gal 2:1-2

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. 2 And I went up by revelation, (the unveiling:) 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.

What did Paul do in those 14 year?

- three years in the Arabian desert,
- the Lord began to teach him.

Emerging from the desert,

- he spent fifteen days in Jerusalem primarily with Peter.

Then he went to his hometown of Tarsus—where he remained for the next eleven years.

When the church leaders in Jerusalem heard of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Antioch,

- they sent Barnabas
- to see what was happening up there.

Barnabas then contacted Paul

- and together they went to Antioch,
- and ministered there in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).

3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

False brethren were brought into the meeting to spy out the liberties of the Christians.

They were still searching for ways to bring them into bondage.

Paul's message of God's acceptance was about to be tested in these verses

The Jerusalem church was now in a position to practice what they preached.

Titus was an uncircumcised Gentile

- and the gospel applied to him and any others
- without the requirement of circumcision.

This showed that the Jerusalem church

- accepted Paul's policy

- And they were ready to move forward

5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul had already tried living under their terms.

He knew what they offered meant no salvation for the sinner nor sanctification for the saint.

Paul's message - freedom in Christ.

- That's the theme of Galatians.

So what are some of those freedoms we have in Christ?

- Sins are forgiven (1 Jn 1:9)
- We are released from the bondage of sin (Titus 2:14)
- We are saved from the wrath of God (1 Thess 1:10; 5,9; Rev 3:10)
- We are considered a son of God (Rom 8:15, Gal 4:6)
- God's Holy Spirit will dwell within us (Jn 8:36, Rom 6:18, 1 Pet 2:16)
- We are no longer under the dominion of the law (Rom 7:6, 2 Cor 3:1-6)

Had Paul not written this letter to the Galatians to explain

- that we are no longer under the law,
- but under God's grace,
- then Christianity would have been
- a watered down version of Judaism

We'd have a works based religion.

Today we are free in the Lord!

Where the Spirit of the Lord is

- there is liberty in the Lord.

But Paul says in chapter 5, don't use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh (sin), but thru love serve one another.

Don't have the attitude of, "Oh, I'm covered in Christ,

- So I can do as I please

That's a teaching called antinomianism and it's wrong.

- Antinomianism teaches that we don't have to be accountable to any moral law.

Listen, if you're saved, your freedom to sin is over. The bible says you were slaves to sin now you are slaves unto righteousness.

So the freedom you have in the gospel is the freedom to say “NO” to a lifestyle of sin.

Gal 2:6-8

6 But from those who seemed to be something – whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man – for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised (Gentile) had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised (Jew) was to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

The apostles whom Jesus chose,

- they were your everyday ordinary men

They didn't sit under Gamaliel,

- they didn't have the knowledge of the OT as Paul did.

What they did have is that they were able to sit with Jesus

- and learn under His direction and leadership.

The Holy Spirit taught Paul during his time in Arabia.

Paul had the mindset

- that the Lord did not show
- any favoritism between them.

The Lord confirms this:

Job 34:18-19

18 For he says to kings, 'You are wicked,'  
and to nobles, 'You are unjust.'

19 He doesn't care how great a person may be,  
and he pays no more attention to the rich than to the poor.  
He made them all.

9 and when James (half-brother of Jesus), Cephas (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.

Paul and Barnabas were primarily preaching to the Gentiles

- while the apostles in Jerusalem and Judea ministered to the Jews.

Notice they parted on good terms.

- Paul and Barnabas went to the Gentiles
- while Peter and others went to the Jews.

Yet, they had the same gospel message.

- Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, salvation

10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Gal 2:11-13

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

In this short section, Paul exposes the brief but fierce confrontation he had with Peter.

He didn't do this because he wanted to hang Peter's dirty laundry out there.

None of us in here would like our dirty laundry exposed.

Paul didn't have a personal vendetta against Peter, but he needed to set the record straight for all of the believers and non-believers alike.

Peter sent a mixed message to the believers in Galatia.

He'd sit to eat with Gentiles, then others came along and he'd tell the Gentiles,

- I can't eat with you.

He preached grace

- But his actions denied grace.

Everything was well, now it seems they were butting heads

- because of Peter's mixed message.
- Today I'll hang out with Gentiles,
- tomorrow I'll shy away from them.

The scene now:

Peter went to Antioch where the Holy Spirit was moving in the lives of the young believers. Antioch BTW is where the believers were first called Christians.

Peter engaged with the Gentiles

- he hangs out with them

When a group of Jews arrived,

- Peter withdrew from the Gentiles in fear of the Jews.

Paul didn't like what was taking place. Here's why

- In the early church they'd have agape feasts
- believers shared a meal.

Many were poor

- but they'd gather their resources
- and contribute to potluck dinners.

Peter participated in those dinners with the Gentiles

- until the Jews arrived. Why!

Because of his fear of man and them accusing him

- of eating with the unclean.

Peter's defense:

When Paul, Barnabas and Titus took relief to Jerusalem

- a violent persecution broke out in Jerusalem
- at the hands of Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

As Herod saw that this pleased the Jews, hey, why not continue

- he had Peter imprisoned (Acts 12:3-4)
- potentially to have him executed later

A short while later, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch.

Shortly after that, Peter traveled to Antioch as well

- When the Judaizers arrived in Antioch,
- Peter may have been trying to avoid another persecution of the church

Interestingly, much like the Jews accused Peter of mingling with the Gentiles,

- the Pharisees said the same of Jesus when He sat with tax collectors and sinners.

The Pharisees said to the disciples in Matt 9:11, "Why does YOUR teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Matt 9:12-13

12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

What they really needed was a heart transplant.

Ezek 36:26

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Paul's blessing to the church:

1 Thess 5:23

23 Now may the God of peace Himself (would) sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

Notice what took place as a result of Peter's hypocrisy in verse 13

- Others followed suit
- Even Barnabas, Paul's right-hand man followed suit.

The Jewish Christians played the hypocrite along with Peter.

When they saw Peter's reaction to fear

- they responded in the same manner.

They forgot everything Peter preached

- about Christ's atonement for sins

Peter held one of the highest offices that an individual can hold,

- and now he's rejected those whom Christ accepted.

The very place where believers were first called "Christian"

- is the very place Peter was guilty of discrimination
- and he came close to causing serious division in the body of Christ.

Hypocrisy is an ugly thing, it always tries to make others do what we ourselves can't.

Paul mentions Barnabas separately from Peter and others.

- He didn't expect Barnabas to be influenced by others

If someone like Barnabas could be so easily influenced by others, we should be watchful at all times.

Verse 13 is also a pivotal moment in the early church because

- The apostles knew that the Lord accepted all-alike.
- But their actions were not reflecting that.
  
- We need to live out our walk in all situations

Pacific tree frogs change colors with their environment. Don't be like them.

Paul put his foot down and boldly pointed out their hypocrisy.

If Paul had opted for peace

- and allowed their hypocrisy to continue,
- the church would have split

But that was not God's plan

- nor was it consistent
- with the message of the gospel.

So Paul explains that in the next verse.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Interestingly we don't know what Peter's reaction was,

- but he did praise Paul in his epistle years later
- and urged his readers to receive Paul's words as the doctrine of God (2 Pet 3:14-16).

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, 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.

Peter of all people should have realized God's grace.

- He knew beyond a shadow of doubt
- that the same grace was extended to the Gentiles.

And Paul made that perfectly clear in verse 16, that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, and at the end of the verse he says, "by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Gal 17-18

17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Gal 2:17-18

17 But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! 18 Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. NLT

There were some who actually believed that Christ was making them sinners

- by them placing their trust in Him.

Since man is made righteous in Christ

- they thought their sins would disappear
- They couldn't connect the dots
- that they wouldn't be sin free
- instead, their freedom would be from the bondage of sin.

It was the law which condemned them of sin.

19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

He died on our behalf so that now

- He was made sin for us so that we
- could be made in the righteousness of God in Him
- we get credit for everything that Jesus ever did.

That's why Paul said in Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

If we could get to heaven based on what we've done on this earth then Christ died for nothing! The cross was meaningless!