

Peter Struggles with the Gentile Issue

Paul at Odds with the Other Leaders

[I have gone through the texts and skipped parts that are not essential for our purpose. I do this to keep you from reading as much AND to help you read the parts that are most important for this exegesis. Feel free to grab a Bible and read *Galatians* chapters 1 & 2 and *Acts* 15.]

***Galatians* 1**

v1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead...

v 11-12 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

v18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas [**Peter's name in Aramaic**] and stayed with him fifteen days.

CH 2

v1 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also...

v3 Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

v4 This matter arose because some **false believers** had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

v5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

v6 **As for those who were held in high esteem—**whatever they were makes no difference to me; **God does not show favoritism—**they added nothing to my message.

v7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Cephas had been to the circumcised.

v8 For God, who was at work in Cephas as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.

v9 James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles...

v11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

v12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

v13 The other Jews joined him in hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

v14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

v15 “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶ know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Acts 15

v1 **Certain people came down from Judea** to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, **you cannot be saved.**”

v2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question...

v4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders...

v5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

v6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

v7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them:

“Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

v8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us...

v12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

v13 When they finished, James spoke up.

“Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.

v14 Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles..."

[James then offers a quote from *Amos* that Gentiles will come into family of God, then ends with:]

v19 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

v20 Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

[There is significant disagreement among scholars on these two passages. Some think these two passages are describing the SAME event; others disagree and think these were two different incidents. Our goal is to acknowledge the difficulty and to see what we can discern is clear from both passages...especially where Hellenization is concerned.]