

## Galatians Chapter 2

### Introduction:

1. As this chapter opens, Paul has been saved 17 years, and is heading to Jerusalem. We learn why in **Acts 15:1-2**.
2. There was a major dispute in Paul's home church (the church at Antioch). Here was the problem in a nutshell:
  - Many Jewish legalists were teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Jewish law in order to be saved. **Acts 15:1** (Circumcision was the seal of God's covenant with Israel, and was representative of the whole Old Testament law.)
  - In other words, they were teaching that Gentiles must become proselytes into the Jewish religion or they cannot be saved.
3. Paul and Barnabas immediately locked horns with these Jewish teachers. **Acts 15:2**
4. They had seen multitudes of Gentiles saved by God's grace, apart from the law, and now these Jewish teachers are telling them they are not really saved.
5. Ever since the days of the early church, groups have attempted to add something else to the gospel of salvation by grace alone. Today, groups add baptism, confirmation, church membership, penance, good deeds, and other requirements for salvation.
6. The apostle Paul made it clear that this is a direct attack on the sufficiency of Christ's work. Galatians 2:21
7. So, this chapter opens with Paul heading to Jerusalem to get this issue settled once and for all. This historic meeting is often referred to as the Jerusalem Council.

### Verse 1

1. Three representatives were sent from the church at Antioch. They were Paul, Barnabas, and Titus. Why these three?
  - Paul - this only makes sense, since it was his message and ministry that were being called into question.
  - Barnabas - this is a logical choice because he had originally belonged to the church at Jerusalem and was a Jewish Levite by birth, yet had traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey, seeing firsthand God's work of grace among the Gentiles.
  - Titus - he was one of Paul's converts, an uncircumcised Greek. Titus was a wonderful example of a dedicated saint who had been saved without being circumcised. Titus was "exhibit A" to show the skeptics at Jerusalem.
2. These three men head to Jerusalem to defend the gospel of grace that had been revealed to Paul and that they preached among the Gentiles.

## Verse 2

1. Why did Paul agree to go to the church at Jerusalem to settle this issue?
  - After all, Paul had full authority from the Lord entirely apart from the twelve.
  - He had been saved and been given a special commission and message from the Lord.
  - He had already completed his first missionary journey, seeing multitudes of Gentiles saved and churches planted.
  - He did all of this apart from the twelve and without looking to Jerusalem for direction.
2. So, why does Paul allow his ministry to come under the scrutiny of the church at Jerusalem?
3. This verse makes it clear that God revealed to Paul that it was His direct will for him to go to Jerusalem. Paul says, "I went up by revelation..."
4. This issue had to be settled once and for all and in practical terms; the best way to accomplish this was a face-to-face meeting in Jerusalem.
5. When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, he first met privately with the church leaders - Peter, John, James (Jesus' half brother), most likely others of the twelve. Why did he do this?
  - Paul wanted to make sure that they were unified before the public meetings.
  - If these leaders sided with the Judaizers, Paul's ministry would be in jeopardy.
  - He wanted to make sure they were supportive of him before he faced the whole assembly. He did not want this trip to Jerusalem to be in vain. This was wisdom from the Lord.
6. Paul also wanted to explain to them the message of grace that he proclaimed among the Gentiles. Notice that Paul "...communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles..."
  - This proves the distinctiveness of Paul's message. He wasn't checking with them to make sure his message to the Gentiles was aligned with what they had been preaching to Israel.
  - Why would Paul need to explain to them the gospel he was preaching if it was the same gospel that Peter had been preaching since the day of Pentecost?
  - Paul would often use the phrase "my gospel." **Romans 2:16, 16:25, 2 Timothy 2:8**
  - Galatians 1:11 makes it clear that Paul's gospel was not learned by man, but given to him by direct revelation of Jesus Christ.
  - The twelve had preached Christ as Israel's King and had not yet learned that through His death the Mosaic Law was to be set aside.
  - Paul's gospel was salvation by grace (without any rules or requirements) through faith alone in the all-sufficient, finished work of Jesus Christ, offered to every person without distinction.
7. When people fail to understand the distinctiveness of Paul's ministry and message, it causes them to run to the early parts of Acts and try to reconcile the twelve's message to Israel with Paul's gospel. It won't work! The twelve did not understand this divine revelation, as of yet. God progressively revealed this to Paul, beginning in Acts 9.