

Galatians 1

Statement of the problem

Paul Introduces himself and establishes his unique authority

- Probably he was being attacked by Jews from Antioch Pisidia who were implacably opposed to Paul and his message of the Messiah.
- He quickly focuses his letter on the Messiah. That is a central issue throughout this letter. Our salvation is in Him, no one or nothing else.
- The issue is how to enter into relationship with The Most High. Many in Judaism had taught that “chosen” meant we get the prize, and no one else does. Only Jews get to be saved. Only Israel can have a relationship with G-d. All Non-Jews must become Jews. The Torah was part of that package. One must be circumcised and follow Torah of Moses as a precondition for salvation. See Acts 15 This attitude did not go away after the Jerusalem council, both inside and outside the Messianic community, it was still a prominent part of Judaism.
- Paul and Barnabas were to be bringing the proper message. A hint of how pervasive this attitude was, lies in the fact of Barnabas and even Peter's confusion about these issues.
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Galatians 2

Paul establishes his ministry

Important points:

- Paul received his message from Hashem first of all.
- A revelation sent him to Jerusalem to **submit** his message to the leaders in Jerusalem
- Paul feared he was working in vain. His fears were ungrounded
- Paul was affirmed by the Jerusalem leaders. They had the same message.
 - This established that Paul was within the tradition of the apostles of Yeshua. He was not a lone wolf, and his revelation was affirmed to be within that authority.
- Essence of the message. Jewish Identity. Titus, a Greek, was not forced to convert.
 - Note: Nothing said about Titus being forbidden to visit the temple, worship with the Jewish believers on shabbat, and so forth. The issue was **identity**.
- Paul points out that even Peter could be mistaken on this issue.
 - It was a serious misunderstanding in Judaism, that non-Jews were to be avoided.
 - The faction of Acts 15:1 was pervasive in Judaism at that time.
 - Paul is on equal footing with the other apostles. They all adhere to a higher authority.

Chapter 2 Continued

Peter and Paul

Peter, Barnabas and other Jewish believers listened to fears rather than Hashem.

- Peter forgot his lesson in Acts 11. (See Acts 11:1-3) This is the crux of the issue in Galatians. Can non-Jews be clean, and participate in the Kingdom?
 - Judaism's answer to this point was no. The fact of non-Jews receiving the Word and the Holy Spirit was destroying this worldview.
 - The issue was **NOT** Jewish practice per se. Jews were not forbidden to be Jews. They were forbidden to force non-Jews to be Jews.
- Peter's Issue: Galatians 2:11-14.
 - Peter learned to eat with non-Jews (the nations) See Acts 11.
 - He stopped doing so after being pressured by Jews likely of Acts 11:2-3 genre
 - He separated himself from non-Jews, refused to eat with them, kept apart from them. His vision was to teach him NOT to do this.
 - Vs 14. The issue was associating with Gentiles, not abrogating Jewish practices. The only traditional practices that had to be abrogated were the ones that treated non-Jews (at least believers) as unclean. Be careful not to universalize these statements.
 - In what way do we know that Peter was “living like the nations”?
 - The issue was not turning from all things Jewish, it was association. By Jewish tradition, merely eating with non-Jews was like idol worship, and those that did, were considered outside the faith. See Mt 11:19; Mark 2:19; Luke 7:34 for similar accusations made against Yeshua.

Galatians 2

Salvation is in Messiah alone

Vs 15. Jews by nature, not sinners from the nations, BUT. Our justification is in Yeshua, not in keeping Torah.

- Vs 19. The issue is the same as in Romans 5-8. Two worlds, Torah speaks to both.
 - Torah has another role in life. Not bring salvation or justification.
 - Torah is not made to purify, cleanse us, only to teach us about those things. Torah cannot transport us from one world to another. But it can illuminate both worlds.
 - How does one die to Law? This is an echo of the two worlds of Romans 5-8. Two worlds, the Torah speaks into both. We die to the rebellion, the cursing, and come alive to the Spirit, and to obedience. Living to G-d is not living in active disobedience.
- The nations need Messiah, they do not need to be told that becoming a Jew will substitute for Yeshua. By forcing them to become Jews, Yeshua is no longer needed for anything. Why should He have died? Just become a Jew, and all is forgiven.
- Vs 20-21. Yeshua brings righteousness, not torah. Torah simply was not made for that.
- Often we universalize, since Torah cannot make us righteous, then we don't need any of it. The response of the Church Fathers was to destroy all of Torah in favor of other rules for living, which were surreptitiously based on Torah anyway.