



GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



Session 5: Galatians 2:5-10

Galatians 2:1-14 | Paul Reveals the Mystery

- Prior to these chapters there is no definitive declaration that the mystery had been given to Paul. As the previous verses suggest, Paul did not receive the mystery prior to his visit to Syria and Cilicia.
- Verses 1-4 – See Session 4
- Verse 5 –
 - Paul speaks in the strongest of terms, and does so because **the truth of the gospel** is at stake.
 - Any act of personal righteousness added as a requirement for salvation is not the Gospel of the church in this dispensation and should not be tolerated, **no, not for an hour**.
- Verse 6 –
 - In verse 2 Paul went **privately to them which were of reputation**, and here he picks up with the same meeting. He is not concerned with reputation, but he is concerned that he **run in vain**.
 - The men **in conference added noting to me**. That is, *having conferred about the matter, they did not take from nor add to my message*. Compare Galatians 1:16, which uses the same word.
- Verse 7 –
 - Not only did the “who’s who” in Jerusalem not add any requirements or other supplemental information to Paul, they readily (it seems) **saw** that Paul had a *different gospel*, namely a **gospel of the uncircumcision**.
 - The phrase **gospel of the uncircumcision** is important. Is this a different Gospel or is it a different audience?
 - The Greek word for **uncircumcision** is in the *genitive case*, which works as an adjective.
 - Had Paul wanted to say, “It was committed to me to share the Gospel to the uncircumcision” he certainly could have done so.
 - Could it be argued that Peter was supposed to share his Gospel *only with the circumcision*?
 - While that was true when Jesus walked on the earth, before Jesus left he clearly said that Peter was to go to **all nations** (Matt. 28:19).
 - The one who does not want to admit that Paul had a *different Gospel* does not want to deal with the reality of this passage.
 - Most preachers and commentaries are so allergic to an idea of two Gospels that they perform eisegesis rather than exegesis.
 - For example, the UBS Handbook on Galatians (used by Bible translators worldwide, thus spreading dangerous eisegesis worldwide), says,

In translating the two phrases gospel to the Gentiles and gospel to the Jews, one must be careful to avoid giving the impression that there are two gospels, one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. Some translations indeed can be understood in this manner (NEB “that I had been entrusted with the Gospel for Gentiles as surely as Peter had been entrusted with the Gospel for Jews”; also Phps “the Gospel for the uncircumcised was as much my commission as the Gospel for the circumcised was Peter’s”). To avoid this misunderstanding, one should make it clear that both Paul and Peter are entrusted with proclaiming one gospel, except that Paul is to proclaim it to Gentiles and Peter to the Jews (JB “they recognized that I had been commissioned to preach the Good News to the uncircumcised just as Peter had been commissioned to preach it to the circumcised”); NAB

“I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised”). The essential unity of the gospel may be preserved in some languages by translating “they realized that God had given both me and Peter the task of preaching the gospel. I was to preach to the Gentiles, and Peter was to preach to the Jews.”¹

- Note that NASB translates as *to the uncircumcised* but was forced by honesty to put a translators footnote, “*Lit of the uncircumcision.*” The ESV felt no need to give the honest truth, even in a footnote.
- Verse 8 –
 - Paul’s **apostleship** was as equally established in God as was Peter’s.
 - Note that Peter had an **apostleship of the circumcision**, using the same grammatical construction of the previous verse, using the genitive in its adjectival sense.
 - However, Paul says that the work of God in him was **mighty...toward the Gentiles**, proving that Paul understood the grammar for *to* rather than *of*.
 - Had Paul wanted to say “Gospel to the circumcision” in verse 7, he certainly knew how to do so.
- Verse 9 –
 - It is unknown why Paul chooses to call Peter **Cephas** here (while calling him Peter in verse 7). It is possible that **Cephas** is a different person, but the arguments*, while substantive, are not convincing. This is the only time John is mentioned in the Pauline epistles.
 - This trio of **pillars** (or seeming pillars) **perceived the grace** given to Paul. This is far more advanced than most theologians today.
 - The word translated **perceived** is γινώσκω [ginosko], which is “to know by experience.”
 - The modern concept of perception is too weak for this word, although the 1611 understanding remained close to the word’s etymology (Latin “per-capere,” to “thoroughly capture”).
 - Notice the words **grace given to me** aligns perfectly with the idea of a Gospel given to Paul by revelation.
 - If only everyone “thoroughly captured” this idea!
 - With this understanding, the trio gave **the right hands of fellowship** to Paul and Barnabas, and then (according to the theology of most in the church today) chose to be *disobedient to the Great Commission* to go to all *ethnos* (the word **heathen** is a transliteration). In actuality, they fully grasped the concept that God was now doing a *different work* that was separate from what He was doing with the Jewish nation.
 - *If Cephas is a different person, then the textual variant in Gal. 1.18 is substantive (compare the Critical Text). If they are a different person, then 1 Corinthians 9:5 and 15:5 (where Cephas doesn’t seem to be an apostle) make more sense. But, if they are two different people (as was often argued by early church “fathers,” then the identity of Cephas remains a mystery (Perhaps the other on the road to Emmaus, one being named Cleopas and the other unnamed - Lk. 24:15). However, if Cephas is a different person, then this passage has to be read differently, more in line with the KJV (as opposed to the Young’s Literal), that there were those **of reputation** (v. 2) and those **who seemed to be somewhat** (v. 6) and **who seemed to be pillars** (v. 9). While intriguing, the Greek word used for **reputation** (v. 2) is the exact same word as **seemed** (v. 6), so the argument is difficult. It looks as if the KJV translators allowed for (but did not require) Peter and Cephas to be different people, an idea which would have been much more acceptable in 1611 than today.
- Verse 10 –
 - The fact that this instruction is different from Acts 15:28-29 causes some to believe that this was not the Acts 15 meeting. However, it could easily be that here Paul refers to the *private* meeting and Luke refers to the subsequent *public* meeting.

¹ Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 36.