

Two Missions
Part 2:
The Paulines versus the
Petrines

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Lesson 113

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Credits

- This lesson is taken from St. Paul versus St. Peter, by Michael Goulder, 1994
- Michael Goulder is a professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Birmingham, England (as of 1994)
- He performed brilliant scholarly work on the New Testament, but for the most part wrote only very scholarly books that are difficult to read for the layman
- This book, St. Paul versus St. Peter, is an exception as it is written to be easily read by the public
- In future lessons, I will use another two other books by Michael Goulder: Midrash and Lectures in Matthew and Paul and the Competing Mission in Corinth, but these make for more difficult reading

Timeline of Writings

- 30 AD: Jesus crucified
- 34 AD: Paul's conversion
- 37-38 AD: Paul in Damascus, Tarsus, and Antioch
- 47 AD: Paul and Barnabas in Galatia
- 48 AD: Jerusalem Conference
- 50 AD: Paul writes I Thessalonians (the first NT book)
- 51 AD: Paul writes II Thessalonians
- 54 AD: Paul writes I Corinthians and Galatians
- 56 AD: Paul writes II Corinthians and Romans
- 60 AD: Paul writes Philemon and Colossians
- 61 AD: Paul writes Ephesians
- 62 AD: Paul writes Philippians and is martyred

Timeline of Writings

- 65 AD: an unknown author (not Paul) writes Hebrews
- 69 or 70 AD: an unknown author writes the Gospel of Mark
- 70 AD: the Romans sack Jerusalem and destroy the Temple
- 75-80 AD: someone writes the Gospel of Matthew
- 81 AD: an unknown author writes Revelation
- 90 AD: an unknown author writes the Gospel of Luke
- 94 AD: the author of Luke writes Acts
- 100 AD: an unknown author writes the Gospel of John

Two Missions: Petrine and Pauline

- As far back as scholars can trace, back to the 40's (just a decade after Jesus was crucified), *there was no single united church*
- There were two main variations of early Christianity that fell under the “proto-orthodox” umbrella
 - (1) the Jerusalem Church held that **Christians must be Jews and must obey the Law** as prescribed in the Jewish scriptures
 - The term *Petrine* refers to this church and to this understanding of Christianity since this group was led by the apostle Peter
 - (2) one led by Paul that held that **Christians need not be Jews or become Jews and need not obey the Jewish Law** as prescribed in the Jewish scriptures
 - The term *Pauline* refers to this church and to this understanding of Christianity

Petrine and Pauline Churches

- The Petrine church was run from Jerusalem and was lead by Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James and John)
 - Later this group was lead by James, the brother of Jesus, and his family
- The second mission (the Paulines) was lead by Paul from various places as he traveled the Gentile world
- These two missions agreed only on the supreme significance of Jesus, and *disagreed on most everything else*
 - They disagreed on the Jewish Law, whether the kingdom of God had come already or not, sex, money, works, tongues, visions, healings, the divinity of Jesus, and the resurrection of the dead, and other things as well
 - We will explore their disputes on these topics in detail over the next few lessons

The Paulines Win

- A famous saying is “History is written by the winners.”
 - This is as true of the Bible as of any history
- The Paulines eventually won, and today we have a New Testament consisting of the epistles of Paul, more epistles from Paul’s followers, and 4 gospels which either are strongly Pauline (Mark and John) or at least “bridge builders” (per Goulder) (Matthew and Luke)
 - As we shall see, the Gospel of Matthew is more Petrine, but is a minority
- Though there was no single united church early on (in the 40’s and 50’s), Luke (the author of Luke and Acts) invented the idea that there had been and promoted it in the book of Acts
 - As Goulder points out, the epistles of Paul, written at the time, give the true story of a pair of churches in dispute

The NT Pauline Epistles

- Paul founded a number of churches in Asia Minor, and was in the habit of moving on to a new city once a local church was established
- After Paul moved on, as the churches he founded encountered problems they would write Paul about their issues and he would write back to address their issues, and these letters became the NT epistles such as Galatians, Corinthians, Thessalonians, etc.
 - We do not have copies of the letters the churches sent to Paul
 - Paul's letters were sometimes copied by and forwarded to other churches he had founded, and ended up in broader circulation since issues confronted by one church could easily be encountered by other Pauline churches

Must Gentiles Obey the Jewish Law?

- The central dispute Paul had with the Jerusalem church was this:
To what extent must a Gentile Christian obey Jewish Law?
 - Paul: Gentile Christians had to keep the Jewish *moral* law, but they did *not* need to keep the Jewish *ceremonial* laws
 - But the leaders of the Jerusalem church felt that since Jesus was a Jewish Messiah sent by a Jewish God to fulfill Jewish scriptures, ***that all Christians, whether Gentile or Jewish, must obey all Jewish laws***
- Galatians 2, is actually the ***driving force behind the entire letter***
 - In Galatians 1, Paul talks about a corruption of the gospel and condemns those who preach this false gospel
 - In Chapter 2, Paul describes the history of the feud
 - References back to the feud continue in Chapters 3-6

Galatians 2:1-6

- In Galatians 2:1-6, Paul writes:
 - “Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised though he was a Greek. But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage – to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who were reputed to be something... added nothing to me;”

Galatians 2:1-6

- How should we interpret this passage?
 - What does Paul mean by revelation?
 - Who did he lay out his gospel to?
 - Who are the false brethren?
 - Why are they spying on Paul's church?
 - What did they see?
 - What bondage did the false brethren want to place on Paul and his church followers ?
 - Who did he refuse to submit to?
 - Why is the truth of the gospel at stake?
 - Who are those who are reputed to be something?
- In summary, what is this passage really about?

Interpretation of Galatians 2:1-6

- Paul laid out his gospel to the leaders of the Jerusalem church “lest he be running in vain”
 - This suggests that Paul feels that *his ministry may be overturned by the actions of the Jerusalem church*
- The false brethren are Jews from the Jerusalem church who came to see if Gentile Christians are obeying Jewish Laws
 - Remarkable! Can you imagine our church sending people to see what other churches are preaching, with the idea of opposing them if their preaching differs from ours?
- These *spies from the Jerusalem church* see something obvious, most likely people *eating non-kosher meat* (circumcision would not be something they could readily see)
 - The spies saw Gentiles in Paul’s church eating non-kosher meat and reported this “**sin**” back to the Jerusalem church

Interpretation of Galatians 2:1-6

- It is indicative of how *serious* that Paul sees this situation that he calls the visitors from the Jerusalem church *spies*
- Now we can imagine what Paul meant by revelation – he felt spied upon and knew that the Jerusalem church was upset over his congregation eating non-kosher meat and *he saw trouble brewing*. Paul therefore took the initiative to go to Jerusalem and confront this issue head on with the leaders of the Jerusalem church in an attempt to make it clear that his Gentile congregation did not have to obey Jewish ceremonial laws
- The Jerusalem church leaders want Paul and his church followers to *obey the Jewish Law*, which Paul refers to as bondage to his Gentile Christians since they should not be compelled to follow Jewish law

Interpretation of Galatians 2:1-6

- Who did he refuse to submit to? *Paul refused to submit to the leaders of the Jerusalem church* on this issue of whether Gentile Christians should obey all Jewish laws, especially circumcision and dietary laws.
- Why is the truth of the gospel at stake? To Paul, the idea that one must become a Jew and obey Jewish laws to attain salvation *undermines his belief in salvation through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus*
- Who are those who are reputed to be something?
 - Per Galatians 2:9 those who are reputed to be something are *Peter, James, and John*, the church leaders in Jerusalem!
- Paul refers to them as “reputed pillars” – what a put down!

What is Galatians 2:1-6 really about?

- Though this passage appears rather bland and obscure upon first reading, with Goulder illuminating what this passage is really about, it becomes clear that Paul is recalling a situation which made him *angry* as he writes his friends in Galatia.
- Paul uses *harsh words* to describe what had happened: the Jerusalem church had sent *spies* to Paul's church to see if they are obeying Jewish dietary laws. Paul then charged to Jerusalem to confront Peter, James, and John (the leaders of the Jerusalem church), whom he derides as "*reputed pillars*" who "*add nothing*".
- He proudly tells his followers in Galatia that he *did not submit* to Peter, James, and John, clearly showing that they tried to coerce Paul into making his followers obey Jewish laws. To Paul, such a change was tantamount to *destroying the very gospel* he fervently believed in and he refused on principle.

Why is Paul so angry?

- Paul established a Gentile church at Antioch
- James and John sent spies to this church, and they reported back that the Gentiles were not obeying the Jewish law
- Peter was sent to Antioch to insist on obedience to Jewish law, but initially, separated from the Jerusalem church, he was swayed to the Gentile camp and he joined the Gentiles in eating non-kosher meat
- When some hardliners from James and John arrived, Peter reverted to the Jewish camp, as did Barnabas and other Jewish Christians
- *Paul's Antioch church was lost to the Jerusalem church*
- Years later, Paul went to Jerusalem to confront Peter, James, and John in what is now called “the Jerusalem conference”, and they agreed Paul would preach to Gentiles, and PJ&J to the Jews

Paul Reacts in his Galatian Epistle

- Years after losing Antioch, Paul founded a church in Galatia, and then moved on
- But this issue of the Jerusalem church insisting that Gentile Christians obey the Jewish laws *cropped up again*, causing problems in the Galatian church
- Paul apparently thought the controversy was over, but now realizes it is not, so he writes to his Galatian church to combat the reemergence of this old problem
- *Paul had lost his Antioch church and did not want to lose another one*
- Paul is angry that the Jerusalem church has violated their agreement, and he explains the history of the controversy and their agreement in order to show that he opposes them, that the Jerusalem church has reneged on the agreement, and that the Galatian church must oppose the Jerusalem church on this issue

Galatians 1

- Paul opens his letter to Galatians expressing astonishment that some of the Galatians are *turning to another gospel (Gal 1:6)*, and that there are people who are troubling them and wanting to *pervert the gospel*
- It is *Peter, James, and John* who Paul is referring to!
- Paul says let those who preach a different gospel be *accursed*
- He continues by claiming that his gospel came through revelation through Jesus Christ, and then goes on to talk about what he had been doing just prior to that, which was persecuting Christians
- The reference to the one who should be accursed for teaching a false gospel is distant from the explicit mention of Peter's name in 2:11, but a reading of Galatians as a whole indicates it is Peter and other Jewish Christian leaders that Paul refers to

Review of Galatians 2:1-6

- *Spies are sent from the Jerusalem church* to see if the people in Paul's church at Antioch are *violating Jewish laws, such as by eating non-kosher meat*
- Paul knows that the Jerusalem church wants all Christians to obey Jewish laws, and *he is afraid the imposition of such a requirement, especially circumcision, will scare away the Gentiles*
- Thus Paul feels that *his ministry may be overturned by the actions of the Jerusalem church if they have their way*
- Paul describes his visit to Jerusalem to confront Peter, James, and John who lead the Jerusalem church
- Paul laid out his gospel to the leaders of the Jerusalem church making the case that Gentiles need not be compelled to obey Jewish laws

Review of Galatians 2:1-6

- Apparently the Jerusalem church leaders tried to coerce Paul and his church followers to obey the Jewish Law
- Paul referred to obedience to the Jewish law as **bondage** and he refused to submit to the leaders of the Jerusalem church on this issue
- To Paul the *truth of the gospel* was at stake because the idea that one must become a Jew and obey Jewish laws to attain salvation *undermined his belief in salvation through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus*
 - This explains Paul’s statements in Chapter 1 where he curses those who preach *another* gospel
- Paul put down Peter, James, and John by referring to them as *“reputed pillars” of the church who “add nothing”*
 - *Harsh words for the closest disciples Jesus had!*