

9.

GALATIANS 2:11-21

I. REJECT THOSE WHO TEACH YOU A DIFFERENT DOCTRINE

A. Because My Doctrine Is Not from Men

6. And when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to [his] face

Introduction

The sixth event that confirmed that Paul got his Gospel from God and not from men was the most dramatic of all, because it involved a confrontation between Paul and Peter in which Paul was justified and Peter corrected. That event was fresh in Paul’s mind because it had occurred only a short time previously. After Paul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem, Peter visited Antioch, evidently to confirm the decision that the Gospel of Grace was the true doctrine. However, while Peter was in Antioch, his actions contradicted his purpose for going. At first, he ate with Gentiles, as he had learned to do a few years before from his dream in Joppa and his visit with Cornelius in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-11:18). However, when some men came from Jerusalem and criticized him for eating with Gentiles, he fell back into the old ways he had known from his youth and withdrew from eating with the Gentile members of the Antioch church. His actions influenced even Barnabas to join him in withdrawing. Paul knew that what Peter was doing was in direct conflict with the Gospel of Grace that was freely bestowed on all who believe, so he reprimanded Peter in front of the whole church. In his reprimand, Paul gave a ringing defense of the Gospel of Grace and declared that failing to accept Gentiles on an equal footing with Jews meant Jesus died for nothing. Paul did not tell how Peter responded, but Peter’s later actions showed he had repented and did not fall into that error again. Paul told of this event, not because he wanted to embarrass Peter but because it was strong evidence that he got his doctrine from God, not even from an influential and outstanding Christian leader like Peter.

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(a) **“I have been crucified with Christ (2:19b-20b)),** 7

[1] **“And I no longer live (2:20a).** 7

[2] **“But Christ lives in me (2:20b).** 7

(b) **“And the life I now live in the flesh, I live for the Son of God (2:20c-20e).** 7

[1] **“The one loving me (2:20d).** 7

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(c) **“I am not invalidating the grace of God (2:21).** 7

[1] **“For if righteousness comes through the law (2:21b).** 7

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Comments

Verse 11. **And when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to [his] face, for he was to be condemned**

The sixth event Paul cited as evidence that his doctrine came from God and not from men occurred when Peter, whom Paul called by his Hebrew name “Cephas,” visited Antioch. Paul made no explanation of when or why Cephas visited Antioch, but most likely Peter was one of the representatives of the church in Jerusalem who went to Antioch to confirm and explain the decision the Jerusalem church had made about circumcision. On that visit, Paul reprimanded Cephas in front of the whole church. It was a bold and even audacious action. Paul did not do it to show off his importance, but because he recognized Cephas had made a serious mistake that would inject error into the practices of the church. He did it to preserve the truth of the Gospel. The reason Paul told the Galatians about it, however, was to demonstrate to them that he did not get his doctrine from men, not even from great leaders like Cephas. Actually, he

was Cephas’s teacher, and not by any means Cephas’s student. If Paul had to correct Cephas, it certainly was clear evidence that Paul did not learn from Cephas, but Cephas learned from Paul.

Verses 12-14a. **12 Because before some came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles, but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, being afraid of those of the circumcision.**

13 And also the rest of the Jews withdrew along with him so that even Barnabas was led away into their withdrawal.

Because before some came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles. Paul then explained the reason he had reprimanded Cephas. At the beginning of Cephas’s visit to Antioch, Cephas shared meals with Gentile believers in the Antioch church. The implication is that not all of those who went to Antioch to report and explain the decision of the Jerusalem church arrived in Antioch at the same time. Cephas arrived first, and others came later, probably because it took them longer to make arrangements for the trip.

When Cephas went to Antioch, he was faced with a situation that was new to him. In the Antioch church Jews and Gentiles mingled freely, but as long as he had been serving Jesus Cephas had never been faced with that kind of practice. He evidently felt uncomfortable, but he surely did not want to disturb the church by keeping himself aloof from the members at meal time. Though it was awkward for him, he chose to be polite and to cooperate with the practices of that church where he was a visitor.

but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, being afraid of those of the circumcision. After a period of time, the other representatives of the Jerusalem church arrived in Antioch, and they immediately began to follow the Jewish practice of refraining from eating with Gentiles. Many have questioned whether the men who arrived later were appointed representatives of the Jerusalem church. They hold that members who came to explain the decision of the Jerusalem church would not have separated from Gentiles when they ate. They suppose that those who arrived later than Cephas came on their own, intending to contradict the members who had been appointed by the church. However, Paul said they came “from James.” The natural meaning of those words is that they came as representatives of James, the pastor of the church. If they had not been appointed to go to Antioch, Paul might have said they came “from Jerusalem,” but surely not “from James.” However, if they came to explain the decision of the Jerusalem church that circumcision was not necessary for salvation, why would they have kept the Jewish practice of not eating with Gentiles? The explanation is that they were making a mistake that has troubled Christians through the centuries. They were having difficulty putting their beliefs into practice.

Ascribing to a doctrine does not always mean that we understand how to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. It was much easier for believers who lived in Jerusalem at the center of Jewish culture to accept that Gentiles could be saved without the law than it was to accept that they also had to give up living by the law themselves. They probably explained their aloofness to the Antioch church by pointing out that they had come as a group to present a united report. They needed to remain

together so they could act together on their common mission.

When the other representatives from Jerusalem kept themselves separate, Peter felt compelled to join them. He was a part of their group, and he was in Antioch for the same purpose that they were. So it seemed natural that he would act as they did. Because of Cephas’s legalistic Jewish rearing, it was natural for him to keep himself separate anyway. When we consider Cephas’s previous experiences, it is easier to understand why he would revert to the Jewish practice of keeping himself separate, in spite of all the indications he had received that he should give up the practice.

As one of Jesus’ twelve apostles, Cephas had followed Jesus for three and a half years and had been with Jesus when he traveled in Samaria (Luke 17:11-17; John 4:4-42), Phoenicia (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30), and Decapolis (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 7:31-37). He had seen Jesus accept the faith of Gentile people in each of those provinces. He had heard Jesus point out that God sent Elijah to save a widow of Zarepath in Sidon from starving and raise her son from the dead, when he did no similar miracle for widows in Israel (1 Kings 17:8-24; Luke 4:24-26). He also had heard Jesus tell how Elisha had healed the Syrian general Naaman of leprosy, when he healed no lepers in Israel (2 Kings 5:1-17; Luke 4:27). He had heard Jesus tell the parable of the Good Samaritan and conclude from it that the Samaritan who aided the injured man was a neighbor to the injured Jew, rather than the priest and the Levite who passed him by (Luke 10:29-37). He also had heard Jesus praise the faith of a Samaritan leper who returned to thank Him for his healing when nine Jewish lepers did not return (Luke 17:11-19). He had seen Jesus accept and heal Gentiles from other provinces who mingled with crowds that came to hear him on the same basis that he did it for Jews (Mark 3:7-11; Luke 6:17-19). Still only once prior to his visit to Antioch had Cephas ever eaten with a Gentile and entered into a Gentile’s home (Acts 10:14,28).

That one previous experience was a most unusual one for Cephas. Not long after Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit gave him a vision in which he was instructed to eat ceremonially unclean meats (Acts 10:1-48).

However, even after Cephas saw the vision three times, he still said, "I have never eaten anything common and unclean" (Acts 10:14-16 (HCSB), and he did not eat. While Cephas was seeing the vision, some messengers from a Roman soldier named Cornelius who was stationed in Caesarea in Israel arrived at the door of the house where he was staying. The messengers told Cephas that Cornelius had seen a vision telling him to invite Cephas to his home. Cephas accepted the two visions to be a message from God, and he went to Cornelius's home. However, when he arrived in Cornelius's home, he said to Cornelius and his friends, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner. But, God has shown me that I must not call any person common or unclean. That's why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So I ask, 'Why did you send for me?'" (Acts 10:28b-29, HCSB). His words were an insult to Cornelius. They were a polite way for him to tell Cornelius that he was submitting to God's instructions, but he was not happy about it. In spite of Cephas's reluctance, the Holy Spirit partially broke through Cephas's stubborn heart that day when Cephas saw Cornelius and his friends believe in Jesus and speak with tongues, as Jews from around the world had done on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 10:45-48). Nevertheless, Cephas did not repeat that experience again. He continued to live in Israel and minister to Jews almost exclusively.

Cephas also had received Paul as a guest in his home for 15 days and no doubt had heard Paul tell of Jesus' appearance to him and of his dramatic conversion to the understanding that salvation comes and had always come to people by grace through faith (Gal. 1:18-20). Just a few weeks prior to his trip to Antioch, Cephas had heard Barnabas and Paul tell of their missionary journey and had agreed with James and John that Paul was given grace to go to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:1-10). Shortly afterward, he had testified of his experience with Cornelius to the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem and had boldly asserted that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus without circumcision (Acts 15:6-11). Yet, Cephas had spent his whole life in Israel, and his entire ministry up to that point had been in Jerusalem. He had never found it necessary to eat with Gentiles after his experience with Cornelius. It

was not easy for him to break a practice he had scrupulously followed all of his life.

Probably Cephas was aware that nowhere in the Mosaic law were Jews forbidden to eat with Gentiles or foreigners, and nowhere were they commanded not to enter the home of a Gentile. The Jews had added that practice to the laws of Moses, but in Cephas's day it was a firmly entrenched obligation that was practiced by all Jews in Israel. Cephas had been taught it all his life and had practiced it faithfully with only one notable exception up until his visit to the church in Antioch. Therefore, when other representatives of the church in Jerusalem arrived in Antioch, he was not able or willing to continue an open, unhindered relationship with the Gentile members of the church. He must have reasoned that he needed to remain close to the other representatives of his church in Jerusalem so they could fulfill their mission together. Besides he did not want to be criticized by members of his own church (Gal. 2:12b). Therefore, Cephas discontinued eating with the Gentile members of the Antioch church and ate separately with the other guests from Jerusalem.

And also the rest of the Jews withdrew along with him. Cephas's example influenced even Jewish members of the Antioch church, and they began to eat separately from the Gentile members as well (Gal. 2:13a). Probably they explained that, even though Jews and Gentiles were saved the same way, that still did not require them to eat together. They reasoned that God had called Jews to a distinct mission and that He wanted them to remain separate as a testimony that they were God's special people. God needed for them to preserve their separate identity in order to remind them of the special responsibility God had given to them. As wrong as that thinking was, they probably explained it politely to Gentile members of the Antioch church.

so that even Barnabas was led away into their withdrawal. The division that came into the body of Christians in Antioch became so strong that even Barnabas joined in with the practice (Gal. 2:13b). Barnabas was a Jew, and when all the other representatives from Jerusalem were eating their meals separately, it probably seemed necessary for him to eat with the other members of his church, who shared his same mission with him. The

separation had become strong and surely was affecting the attitudes of everyone in the church.

Verse 14a. **But when I saw that they were not walking rightly with the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas in front of [them] all,**

Paul saw the dangers of the practice that had spread throughout the church, and he fiercely disagreed with the actions of the messengers from Jerusalem. When he saw what they were doing, he realized he was about to lose all the hard-earned gains that had come from his teaching of salvation through the free grace of God. Paul saw that Cephas's action denied the truth that he professed to believe and teach. Cephas's actions did not match his confession. Paul faced the problem head-on and reprimanded Cephas, the most prominent of the defecting brothers. He strongly criticized Cephas in front of the whole church.

The only way we know about Paul's confrontation of Cephas is that he wrote to the Galatians about it. Paul's reason for telling the Galatians about it was that it added further evidence to his argument that he got his doctrine from men, not even from Christian leaders like Cephas. Instead of being taught his doctrine by Cephas, he had had to instruct Cephas. He was able to instruct Cephas because he had received his doctrine directly from God and he knew it was true more than if any man on earth had told it to him. Paul told the Galatians of his experience with Cephas to provide further evidence that his doctrine came from God. If it came directly from God, it had to be true. Therefore, the Galatians should resist every influence that might turn them away from the doctrine God had revealed.

Verses 14b-21. **14b "If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?"**

15 "We [who] are Jews by nature and not of Gentiles, sinners, know that a man is not justified by the works of law but through faith in Jesus Christ,

16 "And we believe in Christ Jesus so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of law, for no flesh will be justified by works of law.

17 "But if, [while] seeking to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are also found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Don't let it be!

18 "For if I build up again all these things I destroyed, I establish myself [to be] a transgressor.

19 "For I through the law died to the law that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ,

20 "And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live for the Son of God, the One loving me and giving up His life in my behalf

21 "I am not invalidating the grace of God for if righteousness comes through the law then Christ died for nothing."

Paul's reprimand to Cephas is a classic refutation of the doctrine of salvation by works of the law. Paul saw that, when Jewish Christians refused to eat with Gentiles, much more was involved than just fellowship. It amounted to rejecting the truth of salvation by grace through faith.

Some interpreters believe that Paul spoke only a portion of this passage to Cephas and that he added the latter portion for the Galatians. Those interpreters admit it is difficult to know where Paul's words to Cephas end and where his additional thoughts for the Galatians begin. Since the text makes no indication that Paul's statement to Cephas ends at any point, and since all of the statements Paul made are applicable to Cephas's situation, it is much better to conclude that Paul spoke all of these words from verse 14b through verse 21 to Cephas. Paul stated his case to Cephas in three points: (1) You are being hypocritical (2:14b-14c). (2) You are making Christ into an advocate for sin (2:15-18). (3) You are saying that Christ died for nothing (2:19-21). Each of Paul's points must be considered separately.

(1) **You are being hypocritical** (2:14b-14c).

“If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?”

In Paul’s first point, he reminded Cephas that Cephas no longer kept the Jewish ceremonial laws. It would be interesting to know more about how Cephas had changed his lifestyle, so that Paul could say he lived like a Gentile. We can have reasonable assurance that Cephas no longer went to the temple to offer animal sacrifices, because the Book of Acts describes tells how Christians went to the temple to teach and occasionally to heal, but it does not say they went there to offer sacrifices. It is highly likely that Cephas also had given up practicing the Jewish dietary laws after receiving his vision that encouraged him to rise and eat ceremonially unclean meats. In Cephas’s day, giving up those practices definitely would have been considered to be living like the Gentiles.

Paul then asked Cephas to explain then why he was forcing on Gentiles practices that caused them to “Judaize.” The word Paul used means practicing the distinctive Jewish lifestyle or engaging in Jewish customs. He was talking about the Jewish practice of eating separately from Gentiles. The Gentiles had no such customs, but when Jews refused to eat with them they were forced to eat separately also. Paul’s point was that, if Peter gave up practicing any part of the Jewish ceremonial system, it was inconsistent for him to retain other parts of it. It turned him into a hypocrite.

Paul was asking Cephas why Gentiles should be subjected to any part of the ceremonial law if Cephas had been freed from other parts of it. Gentiles had the same grace and the same salvation that Cephas had, and they did not need to observe the Jewish law any more than Cephas did. Paul might have said that Cephas especially should not expect Gentiles to keep a part of the Jewish law that was not commanded by Moses but that was added by rabbis in interpretation of what God had commanded through Moses.

The truth is that the customs Cephas was practicing not only were wrong for New Testament believers, they had been wrong for all believers ever since they had been instituted by the rabbis. Jehovah never intended for the law to provide salvation or even to symbolize salvation. Salvation was taught by the covenant, not by the law (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6). The law had been given to symbolize the life Jehovah expected His followers to practice after they accepted the covenant. As symbols of a holy lifestyle, they were powerful teaching tools. As ceremonies that have the power to save, they were mistaken and dangerous. Furthermore, God never intended for the law to become a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. He intended it to be a testimony to Gentiles of a better way of living. The Jews had completely reversed its significance and turned it into a way of keeping Gentiles out instead of inviting them in.

Cephas had accepted that understanding of the true purpose of the law, but he had not been able to completely free himself from all of its practices. He needed to be shaken completely from the remnants of the Jewish law that he still practiced, so he could commit himself fully to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul insisted to Cephas that, to be consistent in his belief in salvation by grace through faith, he had to reject the idea that God expected any of his followers to continue to observe the ceremonial laws given to Moses at Sinai and all the rabbinical laws that had been built on them. The law had served its purpose, but since Jesus had come its practice had been ended by Jesus’ death on the Cross. Therefore, to expect anyone to observe the Sinai laws for salvation was being hypocritical. It was saying one thing and doing another.

(2) **You are making Christ into an advocate for sin** (2:15-18)

“We [who] are Jews by nature and not of Gentiles, sinners, know that a man is not justified by the works of law but through faith in Jesus Christ, And we believe in Christ Jesus so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of law, for no flesh will be justified by works of law. But if, [while] seeking to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are also found to be sinners is

Christ then a servant of sin? Don't let it be! "For if I build up again all these things I destroyed, I establish myself [to be] a transgressor.

In Paul's second point, he emphasized to Cephas that, since Cephas had accepted justification by grace through faith, it not only was inconsistent for him to go back to keeping any part of the law, it also was sinful. If Cephas thought that as a follower of Christ he was obligated to keep any part of the Jewish law, he had to base that practice on the belief that Jesus was leading him to keep that law. If Jesus was leading him to keep the part of the Jewish law that required Jews not to eat with uncircumcised Gentiles, Jesus was encouraging him to observe a practice that was incorrect. Therefore, Jesus was encouraging him to sin. That thought was abhorrent to Paul. He exclaimed "Don't let it be!" Paul meant, "Don't do anything that would encourage such an idea!" So the real transgressors were not those who rejected the Jewish ceremonial laws but those who wanted to build up the Jewish legal system again after Jesus had destroyed it.

In making this part of his argument, Paul used first person pronouns and said, "We [who] are Jews by nature . . ." and "if I build up again all these things I destroyed. . . ." He spoke in the first person in order to avoid being too blunt to Cephas, but it was clear nonetheless that he was referring to Cephas's actions. Paul was emphatic that, when Cephas returned to keeping any part of the Jewish law, he was building up again things he had destroyed. Therefore he was establishing himself as a transgressor. Even worse, because he implied Jesus approved of his practices, he was making Jesus into an advocate for sin.

(3) You are saying that Christ died for nothing (2:19-21).

"For I through the law died to the law that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live for the

Son of God, the One loving me and giving up His life in my behalf. I am not invalidating the grace of God for if righteousness comes through the law then Christ died for nothing."

In Paul's third point, he declared that the law had brought him death because he could not keep it. Because the law had brought him death, he had died to the law. Since he had died to the law, it had done to him all the damage it could do. Therefore, it had no more power over him. After the law brought him death, Christ brought him life through His grace. He was alive because of Christ who loved him and gave His life for him. Now if he decided he had to submit to the law to be righteous, Christ had died for nothing. Paul insisted that he refused to invalidate the death of Christ by submitting to the law, and he urged Cephas to do the same.

Paul's reprimand of Cephas was sharp and pointed. He meant it to be. Paul felt deeply about this issue. He had been freed from the false idea that keeping the law was ever meant to give salvation. He was revolted by any action that would seem to encourage anyone to return to that false and disgraced idea.

Paul's reprimand to Peter was not only adequate to deal with the error Peter was practicing but also adequate to form a concluding statement for this section of Paul's letter. His experience with Cephas was climactic in showing that Paul got his doctrine from God and not from men. Since he had had to correct even Cephas, he obviously was not taught by Cephas or any other recognized Christian leader. His doctrine came from a higher authority. It came from God. It is not necessary for Paul to add any concluding words to summarize his evidence that he got his doctrine from God. The words he had spoken to Cephas were adequate for that purpose. They were conclusive when he spoke them to Cephas. They were conclusive when he used them to end this section of his letter.

A RELATED ISSUE
PETER'S (CEPHAS'S) RESPONSE TO PAUL'S REPRIMAND

Paul did not say how Cephas responded to his reprimand, but we must assume that Cephas accepted Paul's correction and changed his actions, just as he had corrected his actions years before when he went to preach to Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-11:18). Some years later, Cephas, using the name "Peter," wrote a letter to Jewish believers scattered throughout Anatolia. In the salutation of the letter, he specifically mentioned believers in the Province of Galatia (1 Peter 1:1). What Peter said in that letter supports the conclusion that Peter overcame his error and became completely committed to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone and had begun to practice it as well as believe it.

*In 1 Peter 1:3 (HCSB), Peter said, "**God has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**" Those words are a strong commendation of salvation through Jesus' resurrection, not through any works of men.*

*Then in 1 Peter 1:10-12a (HCSB) Peter said, "**Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that would come to you searched and carefully investigated. . . . It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you concerning things that have now been announced to you**" Those words are a strong statement that the Jewish prophets had searched the Scriptures and had learned that God's grace brings salvation, not the works of the law. Before Jesus came, that truth was confined to a few diligent prophets. It had been announced to the whole world, and it had been preached to people all over Anatolia, including to the Galatians. What the prophets had learned from intense study of the Scriptures was now an open secret. It had been announced to the whole world, and Peter affirmed that it had specifically been announced to believers in Galatia to whom he was writing. His words were a strong confirmation that the Gospel that had been preached to the Galatians had been foreseen long in advance by the Jewish prophets. It was not a new doctrine. It had been foreseen by the prophets who lived under the law of Moses. It could now be known by everyone through Jesus' death on the Cross.*

*Furthermore, in 1 Peter 1:12b (HCSB), Peter added, "**through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.**" Those words are a strong commendation of "those who preached the Gospel to you." Peter affirmed that those who preached the Gospel to the Galatians had done so under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who was sent from heaven. By those words, Peter endorsed and commended the messengers who had taken the message of salvation by grace through faith to them. Knowing that Paul and Barnabas had introduced the Gospel to the Province of Galatia, Peter must have consciously intended to include Paul and Barnabas in his commendation. Since Peter was commending those who had taught the Gospel of Grace to the Galatians and since those who taught them included Paul, Cephas obviously had no resentment toward Paul. In fact, it indicates that he appreciated Paul's contribution to his understanding of that truth. It may very well be that Peter was at least partially motivated to write his letter to Jewish believers in Anatolia because, if any of them had heard about his defection in Antioch, he wanted them to know he had fully accepted Paul's reprimand and he fully endorsed Paul's doctrine. It meant he endorsed Paul's constant association with Gentiles without any distinctions. His statement was a way of saying Paul and Barnabas and anyone else who had fellowshiped with the Galatians and had preached the Gospel of Grace to them had done it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and they had his endorsement.*

In the same letter, Peter gave another indication that he had fully accepted the doctrine of salvation by grace alone. He wrote his letter to Jewish believers in Anatolia from Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13). Don't distort Peter's words by spiritualizing them to mean Rome. Paul in his letters and Luke in Acts never had any difficulty saying "Rome" when they meant Rome. Why should Peter have found it necessary to disguise his

meaning by saying “Babylon” when he meant “Rome”? Making Peter’s reference to Babylon into a symbol for Rome is interpreters’ imaginations at work. No real evidence exists to support the claim that Peter in his First Epistle and John in the Revelation meant “Rome” when they said “Babylon.” Peter said he wrote from Babylon. We should accept his words as accurate. Peter’s letter from Babylon is a wonderful revelation that he not only had accepted full fellowship with Gentile believers but also had gone himself to the Gentile nation that had been Israel’s fiercest enemy. He went to carry the Gospel to them because he no longer had doubts about their ability to be saved by faith without keeping the Jewish law. Tradition says that Peter went to Rome, but his own words say he went to Babylon. He surely could have gone to both cities. If he went to both cities, then Peter showed even more fully that he had accepted that Israel’s former “unclean” enemies could be saved by grace through faith and that he was free to associate with them without any barrier or hindrance. The enemies to whom he had gone as a missionary included both of Israel’s fiercest and traditional oppressors. Peter showed by his actions that he had accepted so firmly salvation by grace through faith for all people without observing the Jewish law that he went himself on a missionary venture to win to Jesus the most Gentile of all the Gentiles. When it came to preaching the Gospel, barriers between Jews and Babylonians and between Jews and Romans no longer mattered to Peter.

Paul’s reprimand of Peter in Antioch must have played a great role in Peter’s complete commitment to that glorious truth.

A SECOND RELATED ISSUE COMPARISON WITH THE BOOK OF ACTS

Paul did not say in Galatians when Cephas visited Antioch, and Acts does not mention a visit of Cephas to Antioch at all. However, Acts does tell about other visits Cephas made to various cities to strengthen the churches and spread the Word (Acts 8:14-17; 9:32,36-39; 10:22-24). Cephas’s primary place of service was Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; Gal. 2:7-8), and before his trip to Antioch he had ventured no farther than Samaria and had witnessed to no Gentiles except Cornelius. After his trip to Antioch, he seems to have greatly expanded his outreach efforts. He seems to have made tours to as many places as he could, because he wanted everyone to know about Jesus, whom he had first met on the shores of the Sea of Galilee

The question remains as to when Cephas’s visit to Antioch occurred and how it can be fitted into the record of Paul’s life as it is given in the Book of Acts. In the comments above, it has been accepted that Cephas made his trip to Antioch as one of the group of representatives who went to Antioch to share the decision of the Jerusalem church concerning circumcision. The validity of that position is examined in this essay.

Acts says that, after the Jerusalem representatives that went to Antioch to share the decision of the Jerusalem church returned to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch “teaching and proclaiming the message of the Lord” (Acts 15:33-35). Then “after some days,” Paul proposed to Barnabas that they return to the towns where they had established churches and minister to them (Acts 15:36-37). Three factors indicate that Cephas’s visit to Antioch came between the Jerusalem conference and Paul’s second missionary journey: (1) Reporting on the decision of the Jerusalem church about circumcision was an appropriate time for Cephas to visit Antioch. Since the Jerusalem church sent representatives to Antioch to report on their decision, it is logical and reasonable that Cephas was one of those representatives. The inclusion of a highly respected Christian leader like Peter would certainly strengthen their report. (2) Paul mentioned the visit of Cephas to Antioch in his letter to the Galatians, so that visit had to have occurred before he wrote the letter. (3) In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he said nothing about having returned to visit them, so he must have sent his letter before he and Silas visited them on Paul’s second missionary journey. These three factors together strongly indicate that Cephas’s visit to Antioch occurred after the Jerusalem church made its decision and before Paul’s second missionary journey.

If indeed Cephas was one of the representatives of the Jerusalem church who were sent to Antioch, is it logical to believe that he would have supported the Jewish law by separating himself from eating with Gentiles? The answer is, Yes he could have. His behavior is an example of how easy it is for any of us to let our actions become inconsistent with our words. It shows how easy it is to be weak when we are faced with militant teachers of falsehood, especially when our background and rearing supports that falsehood. We can be warned that all of us find it easy to be weak and inconsistent at times when we remember that even Barnabas, who was with Paul on his journey to establish churches in Galatia, was influenced to join with other Jews in ceasing to eat with Gentiles. Therefore, we can confidently conclude that Cephas went to Antioch to confirm to the Antioch church that salvation is through the free grace of God by faith and still let some of his actions in that very place undermine the purpose for which he went. For his sake and for the Gospel's sake, and for ours, it is most fortunate that Paul had the conviction and the courage to correct Cephas's mistaken actions and that Peter learned and corrected his ways.

A THIRD RELATED ISSUE

WHEN AND WHERE DID PAUL WRITE HIS LETTER TO THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA

The above conclusion helps answer the questions of when Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia and where he was when he wrote it? The most likely time and place for him to write it was in Antioch soon after he confronted Cephas.

Paul's motivation for writing. Acts says that, after the Jerusalem delegation went home, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return to the churches they had founded to see how they were doing (Acts 15:36). Some event must have motivated Paul to make that suggestion. The most likely event that motivated him is that he heard the Judaizers were seeking to do in Galatia what they also were seeking to do in Antioch. They were as busy in Galatia as they were in Antioch, promoting their conviction that observing the Jewish law was necessary for salvation. Receiving that news definitely would have motivated Paul to want to return to the churches in Galatia and warn them not to be led astray by the doctrine of the Judaizers. It also would have motivated him to sit down and write them this letter so they would receive his warning in writing even before he and Barnabas could make arrangements to visit them in person.

Paul says in the Galatian letter that the Galatians had quickly turned away to the false doctrine they had embraced (Gal. 1:6). Since he says they had turned away quickly, he must have written his letter to them soon after returning from his first trip to Galatia. Since he did not say that he already had returned to them once before, he must have written his letter to them before his second missionary journey, when we know he did visit them (Acts 15:36-16:2). These factors together indicate that Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia during the time he and Barnabas were ministering in Antioch after the Jerusalem conference and after Cephas's visit to Antioch. Likely, Paul learned about the Galatian defection after he returned from Jerusalem. He quickly wrote this letter to urge them to turn away from the false doctrine they were embracing and at the same time began making plans to revisit them to personally confirm the appeal he made to them in his letter.

When Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return to the churches they had founded on their first journey, Barnabas agreed they should go. Then Paul and Barnabas disputed about whether they should take John Mark with them. The result was that they split up and formed two missionary teams. Paul chose Silas to go with him, and he and Silas traveled through Syria and Cilicia and then on to Galatia. Their purpose in those areas was to strengthen the churches they had already started (Acts 15:41; 16:4-5). Silas took John Mark, and they went elsewhere, but the Scriptures do not tell us where they went.

How much time had passed after Paul and Barnabas left Galatia before Paul suggested that they return to Galatia? We can derive an approximate answer to that question by estimating the amount of time spent in each event in Paul's life during that period as follows:

<i>Trip from Galatia to Antioch</i>	<i>1 month</i>
<i>Ministry in Antioch and beginning of controversy over circumcision</i>	<i>3 to 6 months</i>
<i>Trip to Jerusalem to confer with the church there</i>	<i>1 month</i>
<i>Meetings of the Jerusalem church to recommend an answer to the controversy</i>	<i>1 month</i>
<i>Visit of representatives of the Jerusalem church to Antioch</i>	<i>1 month</i>
<i>Continued ministry in Antioch until beginning of second missionary journey</i>	<i>2 month</i>
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<i>9 to 12 months</i>

These events are a breakdown of the line "Second ministry in Antioch" in charts on pages 7 and 12 in Volume 8. Admittedly, those estimates are tentative, but surely Paul and Barnabas had been away from Galatia only a year or less. It was indeed soon for the Galatians to accept a heresy after Paul and Barnabas had spent time with them such a short time before (Gal. 1:6).

So Paul must have written this letter to the churches in Galatia from Antioch after Peter and the rest of the Jerusalem representatives left Antioch and before Paul returned to Galatia on his second missionary journey. That conclusion means that Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Antioch from Antioch within a year of his departure from them.

Is such a sudden departure into false doctrine possible? Yes! Judaizing Christians had stirred up the church in Antioch during that same brief period of time. The Antioch church was disturbed enough to send a delegation to Jerusalem to discuss the question with the church there. If the Judaizers could have that much effect on the Antioch church, the immature Christians in Galatia could be expected to be influenced even more. The advocates of Jewish legalism were not casually committed to their support of the Mosaic law, so it is to be expected that some of them would go to Galatia to promote the idea there. The people in the Roman province of Galatia had shown themselves to be emotional, impulsive people and, therefore, easily influenced. They had accepted Paul and Barnabas's teachings readily, but they were not yet well grounded in those teachings. They were equally susceptible to being influenced by another teaching without realizing how completely it contradicted what they had already accepted.

A FOURTH RELATED ISSUE

WHO WERE THE BROTHERS WHO WERE WITH PAUL WHEN HE WROTE THIS LETTER?

The above conclusions help answer another question that is raised by the second verse of the book (Gal 1:2a). Who were the brothers who were with Paul when he wrote his letter to the Galatian churches? Based on the conclusion that Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia from Antioch between the time the Jerusalem representatives left and Paul departed on his second mission journey, we can glean from the Book of Acts who was with him at that time. Barnabas certainly was there (Acts 15:36), as was John Mark, though Paul did not think kindly of him at that time (Acts 15:37-38). Almost surely Silas, who was one of the representatives from the Jerusalem church, was there as well. In KJV, Acts 15:34 makes the definite statement that Silas remained in Antioch when the other representative returned to Jerusalem, but that verse is not in the oldest Greek manuscripts of the Book of Galatians. Most modern English translations omit that verse. Even so, it is the logical conclusion that Silas did remain in Antioch, because when Paul and Barnabas split up Paul took Silas as his partner for his second missionary journey (Acts 15:39-41). In all likelihood, Titus was there as well, though Paul did not mention him after he told of presenting him to the Jerusalem church as an example that uncircumcised Gentiles could make great and useful Christians. The Antioch church had other leaders

who were prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1), and Paul probably had told the Galatian churches about them while he was in Galatia. Perhaps Paul intended to include them also in his greeting to the Galatians.

Among those who were with Paul, only Barnabas had been to Galatia, unless Titus had come from there. Since the others had not been to Galatia, the Galatians did not know them personally, which probably explains why Paul did not mention them by name. They sent their greetings because of what they had heard from Paul about the Galatian believers. However, listing their names would not have been significant to the Galatians, because they had never met them. Therefore, in his haste to get his letter off to them, Paul simply communicated their greetings without naming them. We do not know how he arranged for the letter to be delivered, but it is possible that he knew someone who was leaving for Galatia right away and that he was hastening to get the letter in that person's hands before he left Antioch.
