

Title: A Fortnight in Jerusalem

Text: Galatians 1:18-24

Central Idea: Part 2 of Paul's defense of his thesis (vv.11-12)

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[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer

18 Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and I remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 (Now, I testify, before God, that I am not lying in what I write to you!) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 But I was still unknown by face among the churches of Judea in Christ. 23 But they were only hearing that, “he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” 24 And they were glorifying God in me.

[ii] “How Long?” Series of Questions

How long is a coon's age?

How often does something happen if it's “once in a blue moon?”

Can you measure t/“wink of an eye”?

What's “a fortnight?”

“Coon's age” refers to t/lifespan of a raccoon (in captivity: 15 yrs).

“Once in a blue moon” = refers to a single month in which there are 2 full moons (once about every 2-3 years).

“A fortnight” = 14 days (2 weeks).

As we see in v. 18 – Paul stayed w/Peter a fortnight plus 1 (2 wks & a day or 15 days).

Title: “A Fortnight in Jerusalem”

[iii] Last week we worked our way through vv. 13-17 ==>
“Jesus Not Jerusalem”

That was Paul's first defense of his thesis statement of vv. 11-12 ==>

11 For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

That also connects to t/first verse ==>

1:1 Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Paul is est. his credentials as a gen. apostle of JC. In doing so, he also est. t/veracity of t/gospel he proclaimed.

[iv] Brings us back to the greater context (1:6-9 and the Judaizer cult that was perverting the truth in Galatia)

V. 7, "there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel."

In order to pervert t/gospel, they had to do what? They had to discredit t/Gospel Paul established these Gal. CH's.

These 1st c. false teachers were saying Paul was an imposter at worst or a 2d rate apostle at best.

He wasn't of same pedigree as those Apostles in Jerus. // 1 of t/orig. 12.

“Don't listen to Paul – He wasn't with Jesus in His ministry on earth. Who is Paul to be telling you this nonsense that t/law isn't required for salvation or that it isn't essential to t/gospel.”

[v] Apostolic Credibility

Paul is est. that he was taught by t/same Jesus & had t/same true gospel of grace as those in Jer.

Peter and other members of t/orig. 12 A's learned from Jesus directly – so did Paul – just a little differently. (Damascus / Arabia).

In building his case, he will point out that they did agree as to the Gospel (later in chapter 2).

So t/Judaizers were misrepresenting Jerusalem as well as Paul.

[vi] Paul's response ==>

“I didn't get t/gospel I preach from a man. I wasn't converted under t/authority of t/Jer. A's – and I wasn't taught by them after I came to faith, either.” (they didn't convert me // disciple me).

“[My] gospel came directly from Christ who is the Gospel!”

[vii] “Defense Genre”

Starting in v. 13 we have Paul taking on t/role of defense attorney as he syst. unfolds a 4-part defense of his unique authority as a genuine apostle of JC.

vv. 13-17 which we looked at last time – First Defense of His Thesis (which he est. in vv. 11 & 12).

Today we’ll look at his Second Defense in vv. 18-24 (“then”).

2:1-10 (“then”) - marks Paul's 3d defense.

2:11ff. “but” - begins Paul's 4th defense.

By way of quick review from last week ==>

I. Paul's First Defense: Jesus Not Jerusalem (vv. 13-17)

Using t/1st person in our outline (3 pts.)

A. “Who I Was” (Paul's Pre-Conversion Life as a Jew) – vv. 13-14

B. “What I Am” (Paul's Conversion to Christ) – vv. 15-16a

C. “Where I Went” (Paul's Post-Conversion Trip to Arabia) – vv. 16b-17

A. “Who I Was” (Paul's Pre-Conversion Life as a Jew) – vv. 13-14

Who he was before he came to know JC.

13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism . . .

1. ἐν Ἰουδαϊσμός = In the NT – a word only found here & v. 14

(1) Refers to a well-defined religious worldview

Paul was a Jew, but no longer part of that system which he puts in apposition to the CH of God.

2. He goes into details / specifics – does so negatively and positively

a. Negatively (v. 13)

13 . . . I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;

b. Positively (v. 14)

14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my people, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

For Paul ==> Suddenly, unexpectedly, the

A. “Who I Was” (Paul's Pre-Conversion Life as a Jew) – vv. 13-14

Gave way to the ==>

B. “What I Am” (Paul's Conversion to Christ) – vv. 15-16a

15-16a 15 But when He who had set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16a to reveal His Son in me in order that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles . . .

Chosen; Called; Commissioned. True of us all.

C. “Where I Went” (Paul's Post-Conversion Trip to Arabia) – vv. 16b-17

16 . . . I immediately did not consult with flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me; but I went up to Arabia and again returned to Damascus.

Ends Paul's first Defense (vv. 13-17) – all about t/fact that his conversion was dramatic & could not be explained apart from God's sov. work in His life (that which unfolded on t/Rd. to Damascus).

God who marked him out // called him // commissioned him.

When he came to be a X-follower, he didn't go to Jerusalem but went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus.

But he did eventually make it to Jerusalem . . .

I. Paul's Second Defense: A Fortnight In Jerusalem (vv. 18-24)

Cover all 7 verses this morning. Outline - "P" (x6).
Purpose; Promise; Polemic; Privacy; Power; Praise.

Paul's first trip to Jerusalem following his conversion was to be introduced to Peter – not to the gospel!

A. Purpose: "To Know Peter Not the Gospel" (18-19)
18 Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and I remained with him fifteen days.

1. When did Paul go to Jerusalem? "after three years"
That Greek phrase could refer to a time period ranging from 2 to 3 yrs ("in the third year").

a. "In the third year" after what? His conversion

Paul is converted in Damascus, he spends 2-3 yrs. there along w/some time Arabia.

Then he goes to Jer. Why?

A. Purpose: “To Know Peter Not the Gospel” (18-19)

IOW – this wasn't a visit to learn t/gospel from Peter or to have Peter critique Paul's theology, as if Peter were Paul's superior.

Was more of get-acquainted visit to compare notes on missionary strategy.

Meaning of t/word used here translated “acquainted” is only found here in t/NT.

“To visit with the purpose of coming to know someone.”

2. No doubt they talked about more than the weather

Don't picture them sitting on t/porch w/a glass of wine munching on bagels talking about t/latest chariot races!

As St. Jerome who was born in t/4th c. put it: Paul did not go to Jerusalem “to look at Peter's eyes, cheeks, and face, to see if he was fat or thin, whether his nose was hooked or straight, whether he had a fringe of hair across his brow or was bald.” [cited in George, 127]

a. Paul refers to Peter by his Aramaic name in v. 18

Name Jesus gave to him (John 1:42). “Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

Κηφᾶς – Paul's common title for him. T/word means “rock” or “stone.”

That was Paul's common way of referring to him.
Only in Gal. 2:7-8 does Paul call him "Peter"

Perhaps Paul used Κηφῶς as a way to emphasize Peter's character. He was brazen, tough – rock.

b. Think about the fellowship they shared over those two weeks

Think of all that Peter could share w/him about his 3 years with Jesus! Was b4 any of t/Gospel accnts had been written

"I was there when Jesus healed my mother in law."

"Feeding of t/5000."

Walking out onto t/Sea of Galilee ==> "Lord, save me!"

T/confession of his faith, "Thou art t/Christ, t/Son of the living God."

Miracle of t/Transfiguration

Also his failures – "Surely that will never happen to you" & subsequent rebuke, "Get behind me, Satan!"

Peter's denial of X.

Victory of grace – Appearance of X after his resur. days spent w/him b4 t/ascension.

Day of Pentecost.

Unfettered progress of t/gospel thru all opposition - growth of t/CH.

Think about all Paul could tell Peter about his former life as a renegade Jew & how he was so dramatically converted.

Those days in Damascus & later in Arabia preaching X and learning from Him.

To be a fly on the wall for those 2 weeks!

Paul would have learned much from Peter (and Peter from Paul).

They both sat at t/feet of X – under diff. circum.

They both were chosen, called, commission – in diff. ways.

But one thing that neither learned from t/other was t/ gospel!

Only 15 days! – a fortnight in Jerusalem.

By the time we get to 2:1 we are 14 years after Paul's conversion. In total, Paul only spent 15 days in Jerusalem, out of 14 years!

c. Question: Why did Paul wait 3 years before going to Jerusalem?

Paul wasn't being aloof. He wasn't working his way thru some sort of rivalry w/those in Jer. Was no rivalry.

Why did he wait 3 yrs?

Rem. while he was t/Jewish zealot Saul he was on his way to Damascus from Jer. with letters from the H.P. to arrest Xns! He's converted & starts preaching t/faith he once attempted to destroy! Paul was a wanted man in Jer. See that in BOA.

3. Point: Paul was not under the authority of the Jerusalem apostles – as he makes clear in v. 19 ==>

19 But I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

4. He mentions James here

19 . . . James, the Lord's brother.

a. This is the James of Acts 15

(early leader in t/Jerus. CH)

b. He is the first listed among the 4 brothers of Jesus - indicating he was t/oldest.

c. This James was not an initial believer in Jesus

Cf. John 7:5.

d. Like Paul, God had James in His sights

He was converted when he became a witness of t/resurr.

In 1 Cor. 15 when Paul lists t/hundreds of witnesses to t/resurr. X ==>

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

By time you get to Acts 1:14 he's incl. w/the followers of J.

Skeptic James, hostile to his 1/2 bro. Jesus becomes His most ardent follower.

After Peter left Jerusalem (Acts 12:17) James became t/leader there. See that in Acts 15 (Jer. Council).

Sometimes referred to as "James the Just" (evidence of his integrity).

e. What happened to him?

He was martyred in AD 62 when the HP Annas, led a persecution of Xns in Jerusalem (cf. Josephus Ant. 20.200).

Paul calls him ==>

19 . . . **James, the Lord's brother.**

5. Brother?

a. Was he Jesus' literal brother?

To put it another way, “Did Mary have natural children?”

Debate that goes back to t/3d or 4th c.

RC's – perpetual virginity of Mary.

ECF Tertullian (160 – 220c) appears to teach what was t/common view of t/day: Jesus had other biological siblings.

(1) Debated throughout church history (three different views)

(a) Helvidian (Helvidius of Rome in the late 4th c.)

I am a Helvidian. You probably are also.

(b) Epiphonian view (Epiphanius who also lived in the late 4th c.)

Epiphonian view contended that Jesus' siblings were children from a previous marriage of Joseph.

(c) Then you have the Hieronymian view

Argued by St. Jerome who believed that Jesus' “brothers” were in fact not brothers, but 1st cousins, the sons of a man named Alphaeus & Mary of Clopas whom he inferred from John 19:25 to be the Virgin Mary's sister.

Jerome was defending t/perpetual virginity of Mary in his opposition to Helvidius.

(2) This isn't a make it or break it gospel issue

Some argue that Calvin held to Mary's PV. Luther apparently did.

If that were true we'd have heard of another doctrine: The perpetual frustration of Joseph! Cf. 1 Cor. 7:5.

Exegetically, t/noun αδελφος can refer to a near relative. But most naturally when it's used of a relative t/word means "brother" (in Jesus' case, half-siblings).

NT scholar Richard Longenecker ==>

"The controversy obviously has been occasioned by doctrinal interests. [ie. the growing cult of Mariology] Apart from such polemical considerations, there appears to be no reason to regard James as anything other than Jesus' uterine brother." [Longenecker, 39]

I. Paul's Second Defense: Only A Fortnight In Jerusalem (vv. 18-24)

A. Purpose: "To Know Peter Not the Gospel" (18-19)

We'll get through the remaining points quickly

B. Promise: "The Truth, the Whole Truth, & Nothing But the Truth" (20)

Paul seals his words w/an oath.

20 (Now, I testify, before God, that I am not lying in what I write to you!)

In Roman culture this was a way of saying ==>
"I'm willing to stand trial for what I'm saying!"

In Jewish culture, making a vow was serious business. You didn't casually ask someone to "swear to God" to test whether they were being truthful. Serious business.

For a Jew – you didn't tread upon t/divine name in your lie.
Invitation for God to pour out His wrath upon you!

Third point ==>

C. Polemic: “Getting out of Dodge” (21)

By “polemic” I mean “defense”

By “Getting out of Dodge” I refer to Jerusalem.

1. Verse 21

21 **Then . . .**

Ἔπειτα = another time marker (as in v. 18).

21 . . . **I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.**

So Paul spent 15 days in Jerusalem and then went

18 . . . **into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.**

He did so to evangelize.

Συρίας (Syria) was not t/entire nation, but t/district - area around Antioch.

Cilicia (Κιλικίας) was t/district around his hometown of Tarsus.

Acc. to BOA, Paul's first Jerus. visit ended when his attempts to evangelize t/Jews stirred up persec. against him.

To save his life, the Jerusalem believers "took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30).

2. Turn to Acts 9

Acts 9:19-22 19 . . . for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 20 . . . and he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of

God.” 21 All those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” 22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

This is probably where his trip to Arabia fits in. He preaches there for a time and then returns to Damascus.

Acts 9:23-25 23 When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

We noted last time how Paul refers to this instance in 2 Cor. 11:32–33 32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

Paul was converted, baptized, began to preach in Damascus, went to Arabia for a time to preach there. He suffered some kind of opposition & returned to Damascus where a conspiracy was hatched to take his life.

He was lowered in a large basket at night to escape.

Acts 9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem,
This is t/15 day stay of Galatians 1:18 . . .

Gal. 1:19 ==> It was during that time that he did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

Acts 9:28-29 28 And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death.

Acts 9:30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

That's when he went into "the regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21).

Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Turn back to Galatians . . .

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C. Polemic: "Getting out of Dodge" (21)

D. Privacy: "Incognito in Judea" (22)

22 But I was still unknown by face among the churches of Judea in Christ.

1. But he was in Jerusalem which is in Judea – how could he be unknown?

He was notorious in Jerusalem ==>

When he says ==>

22 But I was still unknown by face among the churches of Judea in Christ.

He's not talking specifically about Jerusalem here, but about t/greater outlying areas of Judea.

“Evidently Paul appeared publicly in Jerusalem and was known to many believers there. He said that he saw none of the apostles except Peter and James (perhaps because the others were out of the city at the time), not that he saw no other believers except these two. However, the province of Judea was much larger than the city of Jerusalem; it is thus perfectly reasonable to suppose that many of the country churches in this area, while having heard of Paul, could hardly have picked him out of a lineup.” [Timothy George, 132]

That brings us to v. 23 and our 5th point ==>

E. Power: “From Persecutor to Preacher” (23)

23 But they were only hearing that, “he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

1. Continuous sense here connected to word “hearing”

The imperfect . . . emphasizes the continuance of the action, 'they kept on hearing'

E. Power: “From Persecutor to Preacher” (23)

23 . . . “he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

2. “The Faith”

a. The body of truth which is Christianity

It is “the faith” that we're to continue in, firmly established – “the faith” that is t/hope of t/Gospel. (Col. 1:23).

It is “the faith” that t/Spirit tells us some will fall away from, turning instead to doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1)

It is “the faith” from which some have wandered-1 Tim. 6:10

It is “the faith” that we're to fight the good fight of, taking hold of the eternal life to which we were called (1 Tim. 6:12)

It is “the faith” that t/good servant of JC is to keep to t/very end ==>

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7)

Titus 1:1 TAP speaks of ==>

“the faith” *of those chosen of God -and- *the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

That’s “the faith” we teach & preach & proclaim & live!

b. Can you doubt that doctrine is important?

(1) It’s essential!

As Jude says in his short letter:

3 . . . contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Why Jude?

4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

(2) The reputation of Jesus Christ is at stake!

3. What about Paul's reputation?

Note the change in Paul's direction.

23 . . . **“he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”**

1:13 . . . how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; (Same word: *πόρθεω* = to destroy, pillage)

E. Power: “From Persecutor to Preacher” (23)

Last point==>

F. Praise: “Soli Deo Gloria!” (24)

24 **And they were glorifying God in me.**

1. “In me” (some translations have “because of me”)

Literally, “in me.” We don't want to get the wrong idea that Paul had something to do with it.

God in me // X in me. You can say t/same thing.

Back to what we saw in v. 16 ==>

16 . . . [God] was pleased to reveal His Son in me . . .

“I received the Gospel when JC was revealed to me in all his Glory.”

X is the object, the substance.

Union with Christ (we are in Christ and Christ is in us).

Grudem does well to observe that ==>

... every aspect of God's relationship to believers is in some way connected to our relationship with Christ. From God's counsels in eternity past before the world was created, to our fellowship with God in heaven in eternity future, and including every aspect of our relationship with God in this life—all has occurred in union with Christ. [Grudem, *Systematic*

Theology, 840]

What have we seen here in this passage?

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H. Power: "From Persecutor to Preacher" (23)

23 **But they were only hearing that, “he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”**

I. Praise: “Soli Deo Gloria!” (24)

24 **And they were glorifying God in me.**

I. Final Thoughts About this Passage . . .

A. Two Words: Creed and Conduct

1. Creed

Your creed is about what you believe, your profession of faith in X. As a whole our CH is composed of solid believers who cherish t/great truths of Scripture & love JC.

We have a bit of a reputation is a doctrinally astute CH.
That’s a good thing.

2. Conduct

Does our behavior (your conduct) match your creed?

Last wk. we noted how Paul could talk about his “former manner of life” (v. 13) — his life as an unregenerate religionist.

That past life was just that. It was “past” and it was “former.”

Note the transformation ==>

23 . . . **“he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”**

Has JC changed your life? If you can look at your life & don’t see a radical change from t/past, or from t/world at large, I’m afraid you are not born again.

What do others see in you?

Do they see t/transforming power of the Gospel?

What are you like in secret? What about your secret thots?

Philip Ryken ==>

The gospel will do the same thing in our lives that it did in Paul's life. Not exactly same thing, of course, because there was only one Paul. But it is the same gospel. Perhaps we have never persecuted anyone, or kidnapped people, or voted for their execution. But we are still sinners who need the gospel. We are evil by nature, and thus we need the gospel to take us from where we are to where we ought to be.

3. Then there's humility

23 And they were glorifying God in me.

When others see what you do (the good things) do they glorify God or you?

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Psalms 115:1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth.

It's about humility.

And it's about a transformed life (not only in your creed, but also in your conduct).

Paul went from persecutor to preacher.

Let me tell you about another man, one who went from t/mafia to Xn ministry ("Tom").

Tom's grandfather was a criminal who helped bring organized crime from Sicily to America. Tom was a hard man. When he was only ten years old, during one of the many beatings he received from his father, he vowed that he would never shed another tear as long as he lived. He became a thief, an extortionist, and a murderer. Eventually he became the number-two man in the New York mafia. His heart was so cold that when hardened criminals looked into his eyes, they saw nothing but death.

God began to call him, but he resisted that call. He thought that God could have no power over him, and that God would kill him for his sins anyway. So he decided to kill himself. As he put the gun to his head, the phone rang. It was a man who had been inviting him to his church. Just to prove that God did not have any power over him, he decided to go to church after all. When the service was finished, he met the minister at the back door of the church. The minister said to him, "I have something I want to say to you, but I don't want to offend you. The eyes are the windows of the soul. When you first came in here, I looked into your eyes, and all I could see was a little boy crying, wanting to be loved."

By saying this, the pastor exposed Tom's most painful secret. But he did not want anyone to know that he had a weakness, so he went to the church later that night to murder the minister. When he got to the church, he found to his amazement that he couldn't go through with it. As the two men began to talk, the minister gave him the gospel. The man laughed and said, "If these people in this church found out who I was, they'd throw both of us out of here. I'm probably the biggest sinner you'll ever see if you live to be a million years old."

And he began to recount all his crimes. He wanted to convince the minister that he was so bad that God was about to kill him; he was just one step ahead of God. But what he was really doing was confessing his sins. Before he knew it, Tom the gangster found himself kneeling on the ground, with thirty years of tears freely flowing down his cheeks, confessing JC as his Lord and Savior. He went on to become a prison evangelist. [Ryken, 35-36]

Paul went from a persecutor of Xns to preacher of t/Gospel.
Tom went from the Mafia to ministry

You?

Maybe like me you went from religion to regeneration.

Love of self to love of Jesus.

Whatever God saved you out of, or whatever He may have spared you from, let's endeavor to live in such a way that others may see X in us.

Brothers and sisters, may you and I so live that Christian people may glorify God in us! May they often wonder at the mighty grace which has wrought such a change in us. And as they see us zealous and fervent, may they marvel at the amazing grace of God that has brought us to be so [near] to Christ! [Charles Spurgeon]