

Exegetical Notes for Galatians 1:18-24

KEY

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Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs:

ποιμανατε (ποιμαινω = to tend, shepherd || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, Second Person Plural).

ἀποκαλυπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπω = to reveal, disclose || Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).

Nouns (gender before case):

πατηματων (παθημα = suffering || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).

Participles (gender before case):

μελλουσης (μελλω = to be about to || Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular Present Active).

Adjectives (gender before case):

(ἐπιεικης = gentle, kind || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).

Independent Personal Pronouns:

ἡμιν (ἐγω = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

ὑμιν (συ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

αὐτῷ (αὐτος = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).

Demonstrative Pronouns (gender before case):

(τουτο = this || Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

Reflexive Pronouns (only masculine and feminine - the genitive is the lexical form as there is no nominative case):

(ἐμαυτου = myself || First Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

(σεαυτου = yourself || Second Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

(ἐαυτου = himself, herself, oneself || Third Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

Relative Pronouns:

(ὁς = who/that, of whom, to whom, whom [referring to people]; that/which, of which, to which, which [referring to things] – Translation depends on case || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Singular)

Sentence Structure

Sentence

Segment Clause

18 Ἐπειτα

then

Prepositional Phrase

μετὰ ἕτη τρία

after fifteen years

Segment Clause (continued)

ἀνῆλθον

I went up

Prepositional Phrase

εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα

to Jerusalem

Infinitival Clause

ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν

to become acquainted with Cephas

Sentence

καὶ

and

Segment Clause

ἐπέμεινα

I remained

Prepositional Phrase

πρὸς αὐτὸν

with him

Segment Clause (continued)

ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε,

fifteen days

Segment Clause

19 ἕτερον

other

Sentence (continued)

δὲ
but

Segment Clause (continued)

τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον
I did not see the apostles

Subordinate Clause

εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον
not even James

Vocative Phrase

τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου.
the brother of the Lord

Sentence

Relative Clause

20 ἃ
what

Sentence

δὲ
now

Relative Clause (continued)

γράφω ὑμῖν,
I am writing to you

Sentence (continued)

ἰδοὺ
behold

Prepositional Phrase

ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ
before God

Subordinate Clause

ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.
that I am not lying

Sentence

Segment Clause

21 Ἔπειτα ἦλθον
then I went

Prepositional Phrase

εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας·
into the regions of Syria and Cilicia

Segment Clause

22 ἦμην
I was

Sentence

δὲ
and

Segment Clause (continued)

ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας
unknown by face to the churches of Judah

Relative Clause

ταῖς
which

Prepositional Phrase

ἐν Χριστῷ.
in Christ

Sentence

Segment Clause

23 μόνον δὲ
But only

Participial Clause

ἀκούοντες
they kept on hearing

Segment Clause (continued)

ἦσαν

Subordinate Clause

ὅτι
that

Relative Clause

ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε
he who once persecuted us

Subordinate Clause (continued)

νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν
is now preaching the faith

Relative Clause

ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει,
which he once tried to destroy

Sentence

24 καὶ
and

Segment Clause

ἐδόξαζον
they were glorifying

Prepositional Phrase

ἐν ἐμοὶ
in me

Segment Clause (continued)

τὸν θεόν.¹
God

1 Albert L. Lukaszewski and Mark Dubis, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament* (Logos Bible Software, 2009), Ga 1:17–24.

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.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT:

18 Ἐπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε, 19 ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου. 20 ἃ δὲ γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. 21 Ἐπειτα ἦλθον εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας· 22 ἤμην δὲ ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. 23 μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει, 24 καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν. (NA27)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Paul's first trip to Jerusalem as a Christian

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's the passage saying about what it's talking about): was to be introduced to Peter and James, not the gospel.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Paul's first trip to Jerusalem as a Christian was to be introduced to Peter and James, not the gospel.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: Paul's first trip to Jerusalem following his conversion was to be introduced to Peter – not to the gospel.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: "A Fortnight in Jerusalem"

SERMON OUTLINE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. Praise: "Soli Deo Gloria!" (24)

II. Observations

A. What Do We Make of Paul's "Revelation From Jesus" (v. 12)?

B. Be Content With Where God Has You

C. What Do Others See In You (v. 24)?

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

According to Moo, the events outlined in this paragraph may have covered as many as 10 years.

Paul's opponents in Galatia had sought to undermine his authority and his message by claiming that he dealt in a secondhand gospel, one originally derived from the apostles at Jerusalem but then changed and compromised by Paul without their knowledge or approval. Up to this point in chap. 1 Paul has responded to this charge by issuing his primary line of defense: he received his gospel by direct revelation from God, not through any human mediation, and furthermore, he had been set apart and called by God to carry this message to the Gentiles even prior to his birth.

Now, beginning in v. 18, Paul developed a second line of defense, a tightly woven alibi designed to show that his contacts with the Jerusalem church were such that he could not possibly have had the kind of subordinate leadership to its leaders that his opponents alleged. The whole argument in this passage hinges on the threefold use of the adverb *epeita*, "then" (1:18–21; 2:1). In the previous sentence Paul informed us of his immediate whereabouts following his conversion, an itinerary that involved preaching in Damascus and a sojourn in Arabia, but not a trip to Jerusalem. Now, extending that clarification, he wanted to specify precisely when he did go to Jerusalem and what the nature of his visit there was. Each of the three "then" clauses forms a crucial link in his alibi against the false charges of his Galatian adversaries. [George, 126]

Excellent summary of events and their connection to Acts by MacArthur:

It should be noted that Acts 9:23–25 indicates that Paul's leaving Damascus was the result of a dramatic set of events. The Jews strongly resisted his preaching and had developed a plan to kill him when the opportunity arose. They patrolled the city gates 24 hours a day waiting to capture Paul, but when his disciples heard of the plot they helped him escape by lowering him over the city wall in a basket.

Apart from such a predicament that threatened his life, Paul may have stayed longer in Damascus. No time frame is given for his going to Jerusalem, but when he arrived there and tried to see the apostles, he was rebuffed because of fear that he was not a true believer (Acts 9:26). Without the help of Barnabas, Paul would not have been able to visit even Peter and James. He met none of the other apostles at all, who may have been too afraid or may have been away from Jerusalem at the time. It could be surmised that, though the apostles did not scatter under Paul's persecution (Acts 8:1), they may have done so by now. When Herod moved against them (12:1), it seems that only Peter and James the brother of John were still in the city, and Peter soon fled to avoid the fate of James (12:17). The mention of Paul's being "brought to the apostles" (9:27) must refer only to Peter and James the Lord's brother, who was certainly attached to the apostles at that time. Because of his having seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:7) and his having been intimately associated with the other apostles (much like Barnabas; see Acts

14:14), this James would easily have been considered by Paul to be an apostle in the wider sense.

To give his readers the greatest possible confidence in what he was writing, Paul made a common Jewish vow: I assure you before God that I am not lying. That statement, along with many others, contradicts the claims of liberal interpreters that Paul was a sincere and highly capable leader but that many of his teachings reflect only his personal ideas and preferences. If that were so, he would either have been terribly self-deluded or else a shameless liar. He was either an authoritative and completely reliable spokesman for God or he was a sham.

Paul's point in this part of the letter was to affirm that he had received his gospel directly from the Lord, not from the other apostles. He only visited two of them for two weeks, and only after three years had elapsed since his conversion. Any accusation that he was a second-hand apostle, receiving his message from the Jerusalem apostles, was false.

After Paul left Jerusalem he went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, the latter of which included his home town of Tarsus (see Acts 9:11, 30). This move was precipitated by another group of hostile Jews who were "attempting to put him to death" (Acts 9:29). He was escorted out of Jerusalem to the port city of Caesarea, where he likely took a ship to his home town of Tarsus. He preached there until Barnabas called for him to come to Antioch in Syria. During a stay of several years in those regions, Paul preached (v. 23). The other apostles were still in Judea and Samaria and had no contact with or influence on him. When word of revival in Syrian Antioch "reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, . . . they sent Barnabas off to Antioch," who ministered there for a while by himself and then "left for Tarsus to look for Saul," with whom he then "taught considerable numbers" in Antioch. It was here that "the disciples were first called Christians" (Acts 11:20–26). Paul stayed on as a teacher in the church at Antioch until the Holy Spirit sent him and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–3), and after that they returned to Antioch, from where they were sent to the council in Jerusalem (14:26–15:4).

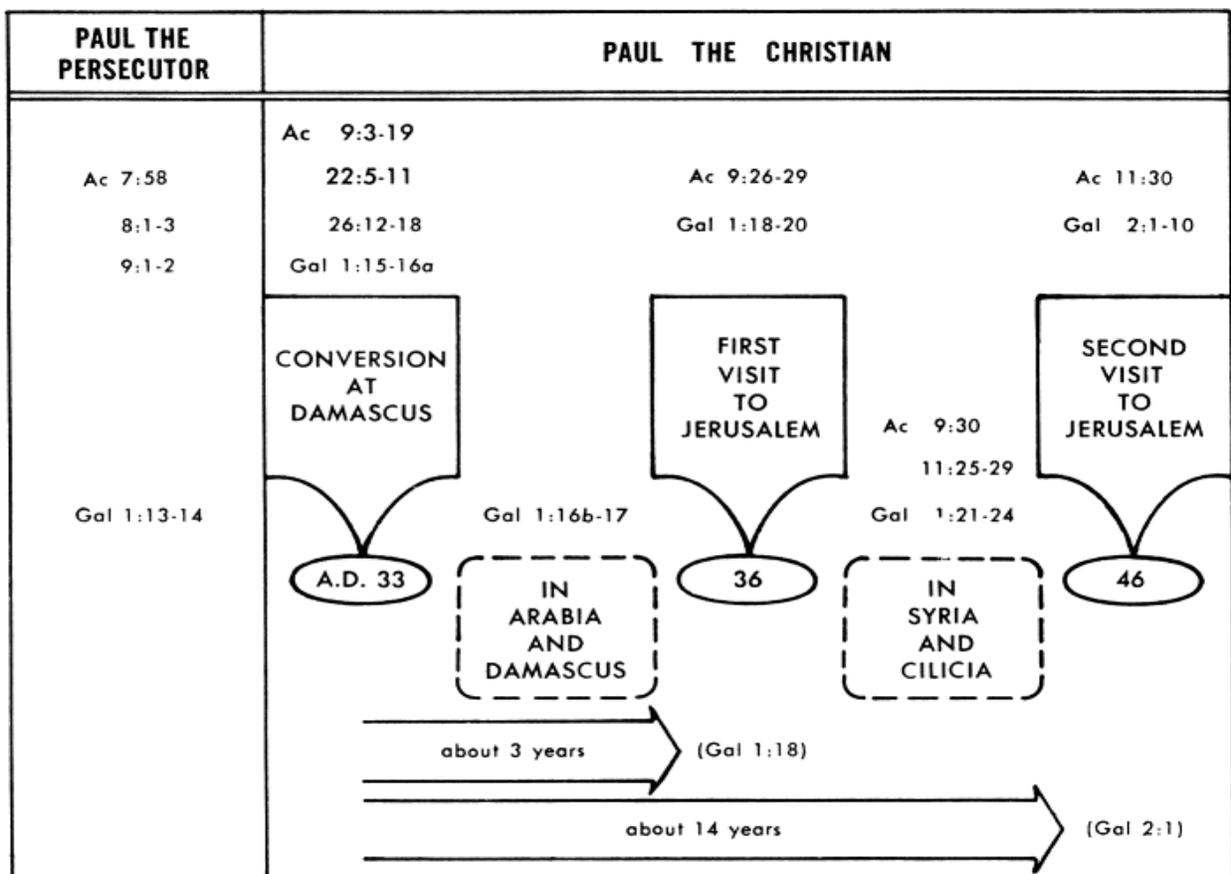
At this time Paul was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. Churches is a plural designation indicating local assemblies that are part of the one church. Paul's two visits to Jerusalem did not include visiting the churches of Judea, which region was usually thought of separately from its major city, Jerusalem (see Acts 1:8). All that those churches knew about this independent apostle was what they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." For obvious reasons, it had been extremely difficult for believers to accept the genuineness of Paul's conversion (see Acts 9:13–14, 21, 26). But when the Lord gave such great blessing to Paul's ministry, resulting in his own persecution (vv. 23–24, 29), his fellow Christians could no longer doubt he was a specially chosen and gifted man of God, and they were glorifying God because of him.

He and Barnabas only made two visits to Jerusalem, one to bring famine relief from Antioch (Acts 11:30) and another to discuss the relation of the Mosaic law to the gospel of grace (Acts 15). Since Paul's presence there was so scarce for fourteen years (Gal. 2:1), most of the people

did not know him except by reputation. And though his gospel had not come from Jerusalem nor been refined there, still the believers there affirmed both it and the power of his apostleship as being cause for glorifying God. The fact that the people were praising God for the very same gospel they knew shows it was identical to that taught by the Jerusalem apostles and was truly from the Lord.

Paul's point through all of this detailed autobiography was that the charges of the Judaizers was absurd on the surface. The church in Jerusalem, which was still overseen by the other apostles and James, the Lord's half brother, had long since recognized his apostolic office and authority and glorified God because of him. James, Peter, and John the three leading apostles among the Twelve had specifically acknowledged that the grace of God had been given to Paul and they enthusiastically gave him "and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. 2:9). In his second letter Peter not only acknowledges Paul's divine authority but asserts that his epistles even at that early date were already recognized as scriptural (2 Pet. 3:15-16). [John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 31-32]

Timetable comparing Galatians 1:13-2:10 and Acts 9-11



Having set forth the issues and alternatives that would dominate his Letter to the Galatians, Paul now began in earnest to develop the first major section of the epistle, a historical overview of his conversion, call, and ministry prior to his evangelistic work in Galatia. This long autobiographical account runs from 1:11 through 2:21 and is itself divided into three discrete subsections: Paul's early Christian experience and his first encounter with church leaders in Jerusalem (1:11–24), the summit meeting between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders over the scope and sphere of his missionary work (2:1–10), and the confrontation with Peter at Antioch leading to the central pronouncement of justification by faith (2:11–21).

These verses contain the longest and richest autobiographical material we have from the pen of Paul. They supplement in significant ways what Luke said about Paul's background, conversion, and early missionary activity. This entire section and the prominence it holds in the structure of Galatians, occupying as it does nearly one-fourth of the book, underscore the fact that Christianity is a historical faith. It is based upon certain specific, irreversible, and irreducible historical events. Jesus was born during the imperial reign of Caesar Augustus. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he rose again on the third day, and was taken up into heaven forty days later. Christianity is not a philosophy of life, or yet a set of moral precepts, or a secret code for mystical union with the divine. At its core Christianity is the record of what God has once and for all done in the person and work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Among these mighty acts of God, we must include the calling of the apostle Paul, for it too belongs among the foundational events of salvation history.

What this means and why it was such a hot issue in Galatia we will seek to uncover in our study of the verses that follow. Suffice it to say here that nowhere in this long historical section does Paul tell us how he felt about the events that happened to him. We can certainly speculate about this matter, imagining, for example, that he must have been greatly surprised at the appearance of the risen Christ near Damascus, or greatly angered by the false brothers who were trying to subvert the principle of Christian freedom, or deeply hurt and betrayed by Peter, who in a tense situation compromised what Paul knew were his real convictions. But the point of the narrative is not to focus on Paul's personal experience or subjective feelings, however interesting such a disclosure would be to us. Rather it is to set forth the objectively given revelation of God in and through Paul, the expressed purpose of which was to serve the furtherance of the gospel (Gal 1:16).

Galatians 1–2, then, establishes a historical context for the expressly theological content of Gal 3–4, which issues in turn in the ethical outcome of Gal 5–6. From the beginning, however, the theological issue is paramount, as we have seen already in the introductory verses. In the historical narrative also Paul was concerned not merely to recount the story of his life but to relate how "the truth of the gospel" (2:14) had manifested itself in his life story.

Paul was not quoting in these verses from his personal spiritual diary; unlike Augustine, he was not given to reminiscence and left behind no "Confessions of St. Paul." Rather he surveyed his

life and selectively recounted certain incidents in order to make a theological point. The theological thrust of his presentation is seen in the fact that the historical narrative flows almost imperceptibly into his theological exposition. Thus it is unclear whether 2:15–21 constitutes the conclusion of his declaration to Peter (as the NIV has it with quotation marks around the entire passage) or the commencement of his special address to the Galatians on the theme of justification.

In any event, the entire historical narrative is evidently intended as a prolegomenon to the central thesis that “a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ” (2:16). The polemical tone we have encountered in the early verses of chap. 1 continues to dominate Paul’s rehearsal of his life and ministry here. Clearly he was responding to a certain representation of his career that his opponents had disseminated among the Galatian churches. If, as seems likely, these agitators had close ties to Jerusalem Christianity, they may well have represented themselves as the true ambassadors of the mother church there while depicting Paul as a renegade evangelist, one whose authority was wholly derived and subordinate to the Jerusalem apostles. Paul, they perhaps claimed, had totally distorted the message of these great church leaders while they, on the other hand, offered a pure replication of it.

Thus Paul was concerned to clarify his relationship to the church at Jerusalem, and especially to Peter and James. Each of these leaders is mentioned three times in the first two chapters. First, just a few years after his conversion Paul paid a “get acquainted” visit to Peter and James in Jerusalem (1:18–19). Then, well over a decade later, he encountered them again at Jerusalem in a strategic conference related to his missionary work among the Gentiles. And, finally, he confronted Peter at Antioch in a crisis over table fellowship prompted by certain individuals affiliated with James. We will have to examine more closely what these verses tell us about Paul’s relationship to the church at Jerusalem and its leaders. It is clear, however, that Paul wanted to assert his apostolic independence over against Peter, James, and all other human intermediaries. [Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 105–107.]

It has been suggested that the criticisms of Paul’s gospel, to which he makes reference in vv 11–12, have controlled the structure of most of the letter. In v 11 his gospel is accused of being *κατὰ ἄνθρωπου*, while in v 12 it is said to be derived *παρὰ ἀνθρώπου*. Both these criticisms, it is suggested, are now to receive detailed rebuttal, but in reverse order: in 1:13–2:21 Paul shows that his gospel was not derived *παρὰ ἀνθρώπου*, and in 3:1–6:10 he argues that it is not *κατὰ ἄνθρωπου*. The bulk of the letter could then be viewed as an elaborate chiasmus (see BDF 477 [2] summarizing J. Jeremias, ‘Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen’, *ZNW* 49 [1958], 145–156, especially 152f.). [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 89.]

Paul's thesis statement for this entire section is found in 1:11-12:

11 For I would have you 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.

Of course, that ties into v. 10 as well:

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

What follows is Paul's defense of his thesis:

Verse 13 – Paul's life as an unregenerate Jew

Verse 14 – His accomplishments as a Pharisee

Verses 15-16 – His conversion to Christ and his calling to preach the gospel to the Gentiles

All of that by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ (Damascus Rd. and following).

Paul is establishing his apostolic credentials.

16b I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

Paul's defends his thesis (13-17) by first est. that his conversion was dramatic and miraculous. It was independent of the Jerusalem Apostles; it came by direct revelation from Christ. After he was converted, he didn't rush to Jerusalem to consult with the Apostles there.

He's addressing the Judaizers' contention that he was 2d rate to those in Jerusalem or was under their authority. Cf. 2:1-2.

Review . . .

Vv. 11-12 – Thesis

Vv. 13-17 – First Defense of His Thesis

Vv. 18-24 – Second Defense (“then”).

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

Theme of this section:

2:6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

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

This section ends either at v. 14 or it continues to the end of the chapter.

Paul's overall purpose in 1:13-2:14 is to assure the Galatians that they have indeed "received" (see 1:9) the true gospel. "Gospel" language is, of course, central in the rebuke passage of verses 6-9; but it is also central in verses 11-12, which set forth the thesis that Paul argues in 1:13-2:14, and it crops up repeatedly in the subsequent argument (1:16,23; 2:2,5,7,14). "The truth of the gospel" (2:5,14) is Paul's focus in this section. But the Galatians received this gospel from Paul; and so, to have confidence in the gospel, they must also have confidence in the messenger who proclaimed that gospel to them. The truth of the gospel and Paul's credentials as an authoritative messenger of that gospel are therefore woven together in this part of the letter. [Moo]

It can be shown that the thesis stated in vss. 11–12 is the main one underlying the narratio, as Matera does with the following outline: (1) 1:11–12 the theme announced—the Gospel is not of human origin; (2) 1:13–17—first proof that Paul received the Gospel through a revelation of Christ; (3) 1:18–20—second proof—that the Jerusalem church didn't commission Paul; (4) 1:21–24—third proof—that those in Judea glorified God because of Paul; (5) 2:1–10—fourth proof—Paul defended his Gospel at Jerusalem; (6) 2:11–14—Paul defended his Gospel at Antioch. All this is meant to show Paul's consistency and the divine character and origin of his message. His life has been a public demonstration of the Gospel of grace. [Witherington, 90–91]

T. George writes:

Having set forth his thesis of the nonhuman origin of the gospel in the two preceding verses, Paul began a demonstration of its truth in terms of five historical proofs derived from his own life and ministry: (1) Nothing in Paul's religious background could account for his acceptance of the gospel (1:13–17). (2) Paul was not commissioned by the Jerusalem church (1:18–20). (3) Those Paul formerly persecuted glorified God because of the change wrought in him (1:21–24). (4) Paul's apostolic work was recognized by church leaders at Jerusalem (2:1–10). (5) Paul defended the gospel against Peter's vacillation at Antioch (2:11–14). Following this extensive historical excursus, Paul summarized the central theme of his letter (2:15–21) and then reminded the Galatians of how God had worked among them at his first preaching of the gospel in their midst (3:1–5). Thus the entire historical section of the letter moves from Paul the persecutor to Paul the preacher; it is the record of “the way of the gospel from Damascus to Galatia.”

Paul's main point in vv. 13–14 was to show that there was nothing in his religious background and pre-conversion life that could have in any way prepared him for a positive response to the gospel. Quite the contrary. His early career and lifestyle were shaped by a confident attachment to the strictest traditions of Judaism, which in turn had led him to take up arms against the

believers in Jesus. Paul assumed that the Galatians already knew something about his past life as a persecutor; he was reminding them of something they already had heard about. Doubtless they had heard this from Paul's own lips, for, unlike many public figures, he was never one to conceal the shameful deeds that marred his past life.

Paul spoke frequently and graphically of his campaign of persecution against the Christians. He told of how he had pursued them, like a bloodhound, from city to city, arresting both men and women, throwing them into prison, voting for their execution, and further harassing them even to the point of death (Acts 22:4; 26:9). Paul gave this witness not to brag on the misdeeds of his pre-Christian life, as some converts are wont to magnify their sinful past more than their rescue from it, but in order to hold high the sovereign initiative of God in reversing the murderous track of his career. Paul always spoke of this part of his life with great sorrow and shame, considering himself the "least of the apostles" (1 Cor 15:9) because he had "persecuted the church of God" (Gal 1:13). [Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 113–114]

1:18 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Ἔπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε,

Ἔπειτα (ἐπειτα = then || Adverb).

μετὰ ἔτη τρία = “after three years”.

ἀνῆλθον (ἀνερχομαι = to go up || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 1S).

εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα (Ἱεροσόλυμα || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular).

ἱστορῆσαι (ἱστορεω = to visit, become acquainted with || Verb: Aorist Active Infinitive). “1. To inquire into: 2. to find out by inquiring: 3. to gain knowledge by visiting; to become personally acquainted with. In LXX, only 1 Esd. 1:33, 42, to relate, to record. Often in Class. The word here indicates that Paul went, not to obtain instruction, but to form acquaintance with Peter.” [Vincent]

Κηφᾶν (Κηφᾶς || Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular).

καὶ ἐπέμεινα (ἐπιμεινω = to remain || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 1S).

πρὸς αὐτὸν (αὐτὸς || = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Accusative Singular).

ἡμέρας (ἡμέρα || Noun: Feminine Accusative Plural).

δεκαπέντε, (δεκαπέντε = fifteen).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and I remained with him fifteen days.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then, after three years, (Ἔπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία)

When did the three years begin? Two possibilities: 1) from Paul's return from Arabia; 2) from his conversion. Most commentators favor the latter.

The words after three years do not merely refer to a lapse of time. They are argumentative. Paul is showing all through this section, his entire independence of the Jerusalem apostles. Therefore, the three years have reference, not to the time after his return from Arabia, but to the period of time after his conversion. . . . The reason his visit was so abruptly terminated was that the Hellenistic Jews were seeking his life (Acts 9:29), and also that the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the Temple and ordered him out of Jerusalem since his ministry would not be received by the Jerusalem Jews (Acts 22:17–18). [Wuest]

The word Ἐπειτα is contrasted with εὐθεὺς (16b). “Therefore, just as “immediately thereafter” refers back to Paul's Damascus road experience, so “after three years” has as its referent that same experience . . .” [Longenecker, 37]

“The chronological marker in verse 18, then, picks up the 'immediately' that modifies both these clauses: 'after my conversion, I did not immediately consult with humans, including the Jerusalem apostles; it was only “then, after three years” that I went to Jerusalem.” [Moo, 108]

The Greek phrase could refer to a period of time ranging from 2 to 3 years (“in the third year”). Much like the reckoning of “three days” as it relates to Jesus' burial.

I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and I remained with him fifteen days.
(ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε.)

This visit likely occurred in AD 36-37 and relates to Acts 9:26-30:

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 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. 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. 30 But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

Note the context of Acts 9 which may lead to the false impression that Paul went to Jerusalem immediately after he was converted. Cf. the Acts 9 timetable I established in my notes on 1:13-17.

ἱστορῆσαι (ἱστορεῶ = to visit, become acquainted with || Verb: Aorist Active Infinitive). “1. To inquire into: 2. to find out by inquiring: 3. to gain knowledge by visiting; to become personally acquainted with. In LXX, only 1 Esd. 1:33, 42, to relate, to record. Often in Class. The word here indicates that Paul went, not to obtain instruction, but to form acquaintance with Peter.” [Vincent] The verb is rare in biblical Greek, occurring only here and in the Apocryphal Book of 1 Esdras (1:31). “To visit with the purpose of coming to know someone.”

No doubt they talked about more than the weather. Peter would have lots to say about his 3 years with Jesus and Paul lots to say about his dramatic conversion. To be a fly on the wall! Paul would have learned much from Peter (and Peter from Paul). But one thing that neither learned from the other was the gospel!

As St. Jerome 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]

“Nor can we doubt that Cephas would rehearse to him the particulars of the Lord’s dealings with his own individual spirit: his own first interview with its then mysterious word, “Thou shalt be called Cephas!” the summons, “Follow me;” the restoration to health of his feverstricken wife’s mother; the miraculous draught of fishes, with the outcry, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!” and the gracious response, “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men;” the walking on the sea, with its “Lord, save me!” the confession of his faith, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” with the presently ensuing shrinking from the predicted cross, and the merited rebuke, “Get thee behind me, Satan!” the beatifying sight of the Transfiguration; the confident “Though all should deny thee, yet will I never deny thee,” so soon rebuked by the triple denial, and the Lord’s glance of reproving love; the appearing of the risen Christ to him individually on Easter Day; the morning scene by the margin of the Sea of Tiberias, with its triple confession of love and its triple charge; the closing scene on Mount Olivet; his wondrously blessed discourse on the day of Pentecost; his great work again with Cornelius, so full of interest for the newly constituted apostle of the Gentiles now hearing it. The story, told, we may be sure, with quivering lips, with streaming eyes, with features kindling with a rapture of holy, heavenly joy, unfolded a marvellous record of the redeeming Master’s love and wisdom and power in dealing with that human soul; a Saviour’s work, such as might even in some respects match that which Saul had himself to record.” [Spence-Jones, 32]

Κηφᾶς – Paul's common title for Peter. Comes from an Aramaic word meaning “rock” or “stone”. Only in Gal. 2:7-8 does Paul call him “Peter” / Petros.

15 days – in contrast to the 3 years he wasn't in Jerusalem. Paul was not a disciple of Peter! Why did Paul wait 3 years before going to Jer? Not aloofness or rivalry. Paul was a wanted man in Jer. Rem. he was on his way to Damascus from Jer. with letters from the H.P. there to arrest Xns!

Paul’s point is to make clear that he was not in Jerusalem during this time. The term κλίματα may be used here in a general and non-political sense of districts or territories (notice the repetition of the article τῆς cf. Rom. 15:23; 2 Cor. 11:10), though it has been argued by Ramsay that it is a technical term referring to the administrative subdivisions of a Roman province.¹⁰⁴ What is clear enough is that both Syria and Cilicia were included within one Roman province at this time, indeed had been for over half a century, and so we may see here Paul’s shorthand way of referring to the fact that he went to various regions within this Roman province. As Longenecker points out, it is clear from the remarks that follow about Judea that Paul does not include Judea as part of Syria, and if as is usually the case Paul is using the provincial designation ‘Judea’ it is in order to point out that this would include Galilee, Samaria, as well as Judea proper.¹⁰⁵ Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria-Cilicia at this time and the next most prominent city therein was Tarsus, and so we should probably compare this text to what is said in Acts 9:30, 11:25–26. [Witherington, 124]

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

1:19 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου.

ἕτερον δὲ (ἕτερος || Adjective: Masculine Accusative Singular).
τῶν ἀποστόλων (ἀποστόλος || Noun: Masculine Genitive Plural).
οὐκ εἶδον (εἶδον || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 1S).
εἰ μὴ (“if not” – translated “except” – cf. NASB).
Ἰάκωβον (Ἰάκωβος = Jacob [“James”] || Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular).
τὸν ἀδελφὸν (Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular).
τοῦ κυρίου. (Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου.)

This is the James of Acts 15. The first named among the 4 brothers of Jesus (Mark 6:3 (cf. Matt. 13:55). Not to be confused with other James in the NT (Jesus' two disciples by that name). This James was skeptical about Jesus' ID (Mark 3:21,31-35; John 7:3-5). He was converted when he saw the risen Jesus (1 Cor. 15:7) and was there in the early church (Acts 1:14). He rose to prominence quickly (Acts 15:13; 21:18-19; cf. Gal. 2:1-10). After Peter left Jerusalem (Acts 12:17) James became the leader there. He was the brother of Jude – both of wrote a NT epistle bearing their name. James was martyred in AD 62 when the HP Annas, led a persecution of Xns in Jerusalem (cf. Josephus Ant. 20.200). He was sometimes referred to as “James the Just” (evidence of his integrity).

“The third James, the one most likely referred to in this text, is listed among the brothers of Jesus in Mark 6:3. He is one of the most important and fascinating characters in the history of the early church although there is much about him that we do not know. However, the following facts are firmly established: (1) James was not a follower of Jesus during his earthly life. With the exception of his mother, apparently none of Jesus’ earthly relatives accepted his claim to be the Messiah prior to the resurrection (John 7:5). (2) Jesus made a special resurrection appearance to James, and thus he is listed among the witnesses to the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:7. (3) James became a member of the church at Jerusalem and was among the one hundred twenty who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:1). (4) James quickly rose to a position of leadership within the Jerusalem church, in some sense taking the place of Peter after the latter’s departure from the city (Acts 12:16–17). (5) James was known as “the Just” obviously because of his personal piety and strict observance of Jewish customs. (6) In all likelihood James wrote the general epistle that bears his name. Some have argued that this is the earliest writing of the New Testament, antedating the controversy over Paul’s law-free gospel. (7) In A.D. 62 James was put to death through the conniving of the

Sadducees who administrated the temple.⁷⁹ This is the first of three references to James in Galatians. We will encounter him again in chap. 2, first as one of the “pillars” Paul conferred with and then as the point of reference for “certain men” who instigated controversy in the church at Antioch (2:9, 12).” [George, 128–129]

Note that James and Peter were the only ones Paul mentions by name as having seen Jesus after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:5-7).

The question here is whether James is to be included as an apostle.

Four Different Uses in the NT of ἀποστόλος

First Use: The 12 Apostles who were called and commissioned by Jesus during his ministry on earth (Matthew 10) . Some of these we know very little about. At least one of them was a false convert (Judas). Others continued their apostleship after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Second Use: Others who share the same office as the original 12 Apostles - That list at least includes Matthias and Paul. Matthias replaced Judas according to Acts 1:26. We know who Paul is and how he was commissioned an Apostle.

As here, I think we can add James to that list. James t/1/2 bro. of J. Same James who was leader of t/Jer. CH / presided over t/Council there (Acts 15).

There are some others who might be part of the list of 1 c. A. These are debated:

Acts 14:14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

Rom. 16:7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

“What’s t/debate? They are called Apostles.” Problem is one of transl. Word for Apostle, like t/word for Deacon, can be used to describe an office (office of Apostle); or a function (ministry of a messenger).

Third Use: Function / Messenger (cf. verb: απο + στελλω). This is where we find English Bibles translating the word ἀπόστολος. IOW – you would never know that the word “apostle” is used if you read these passages:

John 13:16 "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither {is} one who is sent [ἀπόστολος] greater than the one who sent him.

“Everyone who is sent by someone is an apostle of the one who sent him.” [Origen]

In 2 Cor. 8:23 Paul calls his “brethren” “messengers of the churches.” Word “messengers” is the Gk. noun ἀπόστολοι

Same thing in Phil. 2:25 where Paul calls Epaphroditus “my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need.” Word “messenger” = noun ἀπόστολος

So when we come to Acts 14:14 and Rom. 16:7 – passages that call Barnabas, Andronicus, and Junias Apostles we ask the question: “Are they A. in t/sense of office or function? Ref. to them as messengers (“missionaries”) or as those who hold t/esteemed 1st c. office of Apostle?” That's t/debate.

Fourth Use: As a Divine Title. 1x of Jesus who is called ==> the Apostle and High Priest of our confession in Heb. 3:1.

For Simplicity sake we can boil it down to 2 separate categories (that 4th use notwithstanding)
1) Unique Office of Apostle; 2) General Function of a Messenger.

* An Apostle as an office in the same sense as that of elder/deacon. *An apostle as a messenger in t/sense of a missionary. NT apostle parallels the OT prophet and in this sense, it's an office that has ceased.

** o/s of t/NT – t/word was always used of someone sent by another someone. Military commander sending a soldier. A messenger running an errand. Even a naval expedition (even used of the ship itself).

The Lord's brother means that James was a son of Joseph and Mary. This view is known as the Helvidian theory, from Helvidius, a layman of Rome, who wrote, about 380, a book against mariolatry and ascetic celibacy. The explanations which differ from that of Helvidius have grown, largely, out of the desire to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary. Jerome has given his name to a theory known as the Hieronymian, put forth in reply to Helvidius, about 383, according to which the brethren of the Lord were the sons of his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Alphaeus or Clopas, and therefore Jesus' cousins. A third view bears the name of Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (ob. 404), and is that the Lord's brothers were sons of Joseph by a former wife. [Vincent, 91–92]

Historical views on Mary's perpetual virginity:

Tertullian (160 – 220c) in what appears to have been the standard view of his day, simply speaks of the other brothers of Joseph and Mary, a view affirmed later by Helvidius of Rome (aprox. 380). This view = Helvidian. There were some (The Protevangelium of James – AD 150) that contended the siblings of Jesus were children from a previous marriage of Joseph – this view was defended by Epiphanius (c. 315-403). Epiphanius' view. Jerome argued that Jesus' “brothers” were first cousins, the sons of Alphaeus and Mary of Clopas—he inferred from John 19:25 to be the Virgin Mary's sister (cf. Mark 15:40) and fought to keep intact the perpetual virginity of Mary in his opposition to Helvidius. This view is called Hieronymian.

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

It is my view that it was probably the growing Christian ascetical movement which fostered a conviction about Mary's perpetual virginity and this in turn led to the sort of thing that we hear in documents like the Protoevangelium of James where these 'brothers' are sons of Joseph by a previous marriage (9.2), a view later supported by Epiphanius (A.D 315–403). A third view of the matter arose with Jerome (A.D 347–420) who argued that these brothers were simply first cousins of Jesus, being the children of Alphaeus and Mary of Clopas. Though the views of Epiphanius and Jerome cannot be absolutely ruled out, nothing in the NT text really suggests such a view any more than the NT suggests the perpetual virginity of Mary. Indeed, to judge from Lk. 2:22 not only was the birth of Jesus perfectly normal, but his parents assumed that the Jewish post-partum purification ritual was in order, something that would seem unlikely if they had believed that Mary continued to be holy (e.g., ritually clean) and a *virgo intacta* even after the birth of Jesus. It is also probable that Mt. 1:25 suggests that Mary and Joseph had sexual relations after the birth of Jesus and that Lk. 2:7 probably suggests she had more children as well. Thus, Dunn's comment may be on target when he reminds us that in the Middle East, the line of inheritance passes horizontally from one brother to another, and so it is quite understandable how after the death of Jesus, the Jerusalem church might look to James for leadership. [Witherington, 121]

Issue of translation: Is Paul referring to James as an "apostle?"

"I saw none of the other apostles, [I only saw] James the Lord's brother."

"The only other apostles I saw was James the Lord's brother."

The more natural reading would be the latter (cf. Moo, 110).

1:20 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἃ δὲ γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.

ἃ δὲ (ὅς = what, which || Relative Pronoun: Neuter Accusative Plural).

γράφω (γράφω || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 1S).

ὑμῖν, ὑμῖν (σὺ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

ἰδοὺ (ἰδοὺ = behold || Interjection).

ἐνώπιον (ἐνώπιον = before || Preposition).

τοῦ θεοῦ –

ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. (ψεύδομαι = to lie || Verb: Present Middle/Passive Indicative, 1S).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

(Now, I testify, before God, that I am not lying in what I write to you!) (ἃ δὲ γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι.)

The ὅτι depends on a verb that must be supplied with the phrase ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. Based on similar asseverations in Paul, the verb we should most likely supply is μαρτυρεῶ (*martyreo*, testify; see Romans 10:2; 2 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:15; Col. 4:13) or the compound form, διαμαρτυρεῶ (*diamartyreo*; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:1—Paul never uses the verb [*omnyo*], take an oath). The use of ἰδοὺ (*idou*, traditionally 'behold,' in modern English, 'see,' or 'note well') is also significant. . . its presence here brings clear emphasis (perhaps carried over into modern English best with an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence; see RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET).” [Moo, 110-11]

Oath formula. Cf. Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; 1 Tim. 2:7. This type of other formula was one way to indicate before another that “I am so sure of what I'm contending that I'm willing to stand trial for it.” (cf. Longenecker, 40).

No Jew dared to do this if he was about to speak a falsehood, for that would have been equivalent to inviting God to pour out His wrath upon him. [Wycliffe, Ga 1:20]

“His use of an oath here in Galatians suggests that his judaizing opponents were claiming in particular that it was during his first visit to Jerusalem that Paul both learned the gospel from the Jerusalem leaders and received his authority to be an apostle.” [Longenecker, 40]

Antecedent = vv. 15-19 (perhaps 13-19).

""Staking a claim"" in the Old West was serious business. Doing so gave a person the rights over a mine or a piece of land. If a prospector found gold or silver on his claim, others would rush to stake claims nearby in hopes of striking it rich. It was not uncommon for fights to break

out over who had staked a claim first or over where one claim stopped and another started. Men were known to lie, cheat, gamble, steal and even kill to get and keep their claims. "Staking a claim" is exactly what Paul is doing in today's reading: a claim to apostleship and apostolic authority. Not to elevate himself, but for the sake of the gospel, he proclaims his God-given authority. The Galatians must not take his words lightly! – TODAY IN THE WORD

1:21 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Ἐπειτα ἦλθον εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας·

Ἐπειτα (ἐπειτα = then || Adverb).

ἦλθον (ἐρχομαι = to come, go || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 1S).

εἰς τὰ κλίματα (κλίμα = region, district || Noun: Neuter Accusative Plural).

τῆς Συρίας (Συρίας = Syria || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). The area around Antioch.

καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας· (Κιλικίας = Cilicia || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular). The area around his hometown of Tarsus (cf. Acts 9:30).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (Ἐπειτα ἦλθον εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας·)

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

Paul's 1st post-conversion trip to Jer (1:18-20) and his second post-conversion trip = 2:1-10. Between those two trips is the εὐαγγελίζεται of v. 23. So this was a period of preaching the gospel. Some speculate that the hardships Paul mentions in 12 Cor. 11:23-29 happened at this time.

τῆς Συρίας = The area around Antioch. καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας = The area around his hometown of Tarsus (cf. Acts 9:30).

Syria and Cilicia. Syria, in the narrower sense, of the district of which Antioch was the capital: not the whole Roman province of Syria, including Galilee and Judaea. Matt. 4:24; L. 2:2; Acts 20:3. This district was the scene of Paul's first apostolic work among the Gentiles. Cilicia was the southeasterly province of Asia Minor, directly adjoining Syria, from which it was separated by Mt. Pierius and the range of Amanus. It was bordered by the Mediterranean on the south. It was Paul's native province, and its capital was Tarsus, Paul's birthplace. [Vincent, 92-93]

This verse records a period of preaching, as indicated by verse 23. The word region is from *klimata* (κλίματα). It denotes the fingers of coastland sloping down from the mountains to the sea in northwestern Syria and eastern Cilicia. The name Syria is placed first because Paul's ministry at Antioch preceded that at Tarsus, and because Cilicia was subordinate to Syria in the Roman empire, being only a district of the great province of Syria. Here we have about ten years of Paul's life passed over in silence, between his flight from Jerusalem to Tarsus and his

return to the former city for the Apostolic Council. These years were spent around Tarsus and Antioch, in Cyprus and Asia Minor. [Wuest]

According to Luke, Paul's first Jerusalem visit ended when his attempts to evangelize Hellenistic Jews stirred up persecution against him. To save his life, the Jerusalem believers "took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30). It was after some time—probably around eight years—that Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch to join him in ministry in that key city (Acts 11:25-26). Tarsus was one of the major cities in the Roman province of Cilicia. So Paul's claim here in Galatians . . . (...I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia) must describe his move to Tarsus. However, since Paul follows up this notice of movement with a description of activity during that period, the combination ἤλθον εἰς probably has the sense "Then I came into" (cf. KJV). Paul's use of the two provincial names, Syria and Cilicia, shows that Paul has in mind the entire period of time from his move to Tarsus until his next journey to Jerusalem for the council described in Gal. 2:1-10. Assuming, as we argue, that this council took place during the visit to Jerusalem described in Acts 11:27-30, this period of time includes ministry in Tarsus for around eight years and ministry in Antioch for at least a year: see Acts 11:26: "So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church [in Antioch] and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." [Moo, 111 – Underlining mine: *Note connections to Tarsus in my introduction to Galatians*]

“Here Paul introduced the second of the “then” clauses to show the independence of his ministry and missionary activity. In Paul’s terse account of his first visit to Jerusalem, he presented only one reason for his journey to that city: to get personally acquainted with Peter. However, we know from Acts 9:26–30 that those fifteen days were filled with other activities as well. Indeed, it seems likely that Paul may well have intended to stay in Jerusalem for more than two weeks. We know that he “tried to join the disciples” there, but they rejected him, being as yet unconvinced of the sincerity of his Christian profession (Acts 9:26). Barnabas, we are told, befriended him and introduced him to the apostles, that is, to Peter and James. Paul preached freely throughout the city, as he had done in Damascus before, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. His debates with the Hellenistic Jews led to their efforts to put him to death.

It is at this point that we should place the vision Paul had while praying in the temple. While in a trance he saw Christ, who told him to leave Jerusalem immediately since his testimony would not be received there. Paul was reluctant to obey, believing that he should remain and bear witness to those he had formerly persecuted. But the Lord replied, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:17–21). When the Jerusalem Christians discovered the plot against Paul’s life, they accompanied him to the port city of Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. Thus, in a sense, the excursion to Syria and Cilicia was really Paul’s “first missionary journey,” unless we use that designation for his earlier work in Arabia. From 25 B.C. to A.D. 72, Syria and Cilicia were united as a single Roman province with a common governor who was based in Syrian Antioch. Tarsus, Paul’s home city, was the capital of Cilicia, which covered the southeastern region of Asia Minor.” [George, 129–130]

Result of Paul’s ministry there? We see from references in Acts that Paul’s preaching was fruitful in conversions and churches. The Jerusalem Council addressed its letter “to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.” A later journey of Paul and Silas describes them as those who “went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:23–41).

“God sometimes calls his servants to labor in obscure places and under difficult circumstances in order to make them ready for some particular task or assignment unknown to them at the time. It may well be that Paul would not have had the wisdom to write Romans, or the equanimity to deal with the fractious Corinthians, or the courage to withstand the false teachers of Galatia, or the endurance to face arrest in Jerusalem and martyrdom in Rome had it not been for the ten years or so he spent laboring in little-known places with results difficult to quantify.” [George, 130–131]

Conversely, we cannot make light of what may seem to be obscure (cf. Jonathan Edwards).

1:22 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἤμην δὲ ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.

ἤμην δὲ (ἐίμι || Verb: Imperfect Middle Indicative, 1S). Emphasizes a continuous process.
ἀγνοούμενος (ἀγνοεω = to not know, be ignorant || Participle: Masculine Nominative Singular Present Passive).

τῷ προσώπῳ (προσώπον = face || Noun: Neuter Dative Singular).

ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις (ἐκκλησία || Noun: Feminine Dative Plural).

τῆς Ἰουδαίας (Ἰουδαίας || Noun: Feminine Genitive Singular).

ταῖς (ἡ || Definite Article: Feminine Dative Plural).

ἐν Χριστῷ. (Noun: Masculine Dative Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But I was still unknown by face among the churches of Judea in Christ. (ἤμην δὲ ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς ἐν Χριστῷ.)

ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις . . . ἐν Χριστῷ. As opposed to the Jewish assemblies, church being a neutral term not limited to Christian congregations (cf. 1 Thess. 2:14).

“In Christ” = a favorite phrase of Paul to relate the union of the believer to JC. Used 8 x in Gal. (here, 2:4,17; 3:14,26,28; 5:6,10). Most significant = 3:26-29.

“. . . his being unknown to the Judean churches (v22) is undoubtedly to show that his work during the time between his two Jerusalem visits was not in such areas as would have been expected had he been under the supervision of the Jerusalem apostles.” [Longenecker, 41]

Cf. “Churches of Judea” (local congregations) with the “church of God” (universal church) in v. 13.

“Some scholars have claimed that this passage flatly contradicts Luke’s account of Paul’s first postconversion visit to Jerusalem, where he preached publicly and evidently was known to a number of the believers there.⁸⁵ Others have gone to the opposite extreme, claiming that Paul must have traveled to Jerusalem incognito and spent his two weeks there “somewhere in a back room of Peter’s house.”⁸⁶ The evidence, however, demands neither that we do violence to the historical integrity of Acts nor draw such a drastic conclusion concerning Paul’s movements. 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.” [George, 132]

Verse 22 refers to Paul being unknown by ‘face’ to the Christian assemblies in Judea. This has sometimes been seen to contradict the account in Acts 8:3. It must be seen, however, that the difficulty is not just with what Acts says, but with what Paul himself claims in Gal. 1:13. How can he have both persecuted the church of God and not be known to them? Several points are germane. Firstly, Acts 8:3 does not suggest that Paul ever persecuted any house group of Christians outside of Jerusalem itself, nor does Gal. 1:13. Paul’s persecution transpired during the earliest days of the existence of the church when it was just forming in Jerusalem. Secondly, one must reckon on some church expansion between that time of persecution and the time when Paul went off to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. At least three or four years had gone by from the time of Paul’s conversion. During that time the early church may have established various new house churches in outlying areas in Judea. Notice that whereas Paul speaks of ‘church’ (singular) in 1:13 he speaks of congregations (plural) in 1:22. Thirdly, note Paul speaks of ‘remaining unknown by face’. This means that in these churches he was previously unknown as well. Fourthly, note that the following verse seems to provide us with a report of the Jerusalem church about Paul’s conversion to these other churches. They had learned of this only second hand. I thus conclude it is not necessary to see a contradiction here between what is said in 1:13 and what is said in 1:22, or with Acts either.

Paul was known by some members of the Jerusalem church both before and after his conversion. It was the household congregations in Jerusalem that he had ravaged when he was a persecutor. His was an urban strategy of persecution—first Jerusalem, then Damascus, just like his later urban strategy of evangelism. Paul had not dealt with the outlying congregations and of course he had not persecuted those who were only converted in Judea after Paul’s own conversion. Paul’s point in saying what he does is in part to make clear that he owed nothing of his Gospel or ministry to these other churches in Judea either. Finally, notice that Paul speaks here of these assemblies being ‘in Christ’, which seems to have a locative sense here. Just as Paul had previously been ‘in Judaism’ so now he and Christian congregations were ‘in Christ’ as a distinct and distinguishable bounded social entity. [Witherington, 124–125]

1:23 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει,

μόνον δὲ (μόνον = only || Adverb).

ἀκούοντες (ἀκούω || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural Present Active).

ἦσαν (ἔμι || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3P). “The imperfect periphrastic ἀκούοντες ἦσαν (as in v22) lays emphasis on the continuance of the action, 'they kept on hearing'--with the subject being the Judean churches.” [Longenecker, 41]

ὅτι ὁ διώκων (διώκω || Participle: Masculine Nominative Singular Present Active).

ἡμᾶς (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Accusative Plural).

ποτε (ποτε = once, formerly || Adverb).

νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται (εὐαγγελίζωμαι || Verb: Present Middle Indicative, 3S).

τὴν πίστιν (πίστις || Noun: Feminine Accusative Singular). The body of truth which is Christianity.

ἣν (ὅς = that || Relative Pronoun: Feminine Accusative Singular).

ποτε (ποτε = once, formerly || Adverb).

ἐπόρθει, (πόρθεω = to destroy, pillage || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3S). Same word as in v. 13.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

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

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But they were only hearing that, “he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” (μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἦσαν ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει,)

ἦσαν (ἔμι || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3P). “The imperfect periphrastic ἀκούοντες ἦσαν (as in v22) lays emphasis on the continuance of the action, 'they kept on hearing'--with the subject being the Judean churches.” [Longenecker, 41]

τὴν πίστιν = the body of truth which is Christianity (cf. Jude 3 and my notes on this text).

ἐπόρθει, (πόρθεω = to destroy, pillage || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3S). Same word as in v. 13.

1:24 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν.

καὶ ἐδόξαζον (δόξα || Verb: Imperfect Active Indicative, 3P)
ἐν ἐμοὶ (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Singular).
τὸν θεόν. (Noun: Masculine Accusative Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

And they were glorifying God in me.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And they were glorifying God in me. (καὶ ἐδόξαζον ἐν ἐμοὶ τὸν θεόν.)

Language here is reminiscent of God's statement regarding His Servant in Isaiah 49:3 LXX: ἐν σοὶ δοξασθησομαι (“because of you I shall be praised”). Cf. Paul's earlier connection to the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah in v. 15.

Often translated “because of” – literally, “in me.” We don't want to get the wrong idea that Paul had something to do with it.

The preposition “in” is used here as indicating the reason or basis of an action (compare Knox “They praised God for what he had done in me,” Phps “they thanked God for what had happened to me”). Because of me may be understood in terms of “what God had done to me,” “what God had done through me,” or “what I had done.” Since the praise was rendered to God for what Paul was at that time doing, it seems more satisfactory to say “they praised God because of what he had done through me,” or “... what God had caused me to do.” [UBS, 26]

John Brown aptly summarizes this section of Galatians...

It appears, then, from these statements, that Paul was engaged for three years in preaching the gospel before he had any intercourse with a Christian apostle; that, when he did see them, he saw only two of them; that he went, not to learn from them as a scholar, but to visit them as an equal; that he was only fifteen days in Jerusalem upon that occasion; that he then went into Syria and Cilicia, where there were no apostles, and where he exercised all the powers of an apostle—planting churches; and that the churches of Judea, though he stood in no peculiar relation to them, and was not even personally known to them, glorified God on account of his being converted from one of the most furious persecutors, into one of the most devoted supporters, of the faith of Christ, and of course considered him as having a title to the name and place he occupied in the church: all which particulars were obviously fitted to answer the apostle's object—the assertion of his dignity as an apostle, and of his integrity as a man. (Brown, http://preceptaustin.org/galatians_1_commentary.htm)

God Glorified in You and Me - It should ever be the end of the Christian man, not only to promote the glory of God by his works, but to illustrate the glory of God in his character; in this, as in nothing else, are the goodness and power of God seen most strikingly. An architect rears a building. It is admired for its beauty in detail, and its grandeur as a whole; but the praise belongs not to the building, but to the builder. A tutor takes a youth under his care, and sends him forth to attain eminence and distinction in the early struggles and in the highest positions of life, but the tutor is glorified in the pupil. So the creation is the result of the Almighty hand, and He is glorified in it. Impressions of His glory are left upon the largest and upon the least; upon the stars in their courses discovered to the telescope; and on the minutest specimens of organized life which the microscope opens to our startled eye. And shall my God be less glorified in the new creation than He is in the old? Shall He not be glorified by the humblest Christian, just as He was glorified by the great apostle? All stars shine by His will, and one star differs from another star in glory, for this is His will; but each renders to Him its measure of praise. God, who is glorified in Saul of Tarsus pre-eminently, must be glorified in each of us, as Christians, according to our position and opportunity. If we have a Christian's hope, it is to the glory of His name; if we have a Christian's life, it is to the glory of His cross; if we have performed a duty, it is to the glory of His grace; if we have borne a trial, it is to the glory of His support; if we have overcome a sinful habit, or the lust which led to it, it is to the glory of His power which gave us self-mastery. (C. J. P. Eyre, M. A.) (The Biblical Illustrator)

F B Meyer - Some young men belonging to the Salvation Army came to old Andrew Bonar, and they said:

" Dr. Bonar, we have been" all night with God. Can't you see our faces shine? "

The old man said: "Moses wist not (was not aware) that his face shone,"

When you have got the real article you do not need to advertise it, the public will come for it; but the man who has got what we call in England, Brummagem ware, a sham, must puff it. If you have got Christ in you, people will not glorify you, they will glorify Christ in you, and they will say: "Teach us about Christ who has made you so fair."

"They glorified God in me." Dear brother ministers, when you get this, they will not glorify your sermons, they will not glorify your intellect, and they will not glorify your eloquence; but they will glorify God who shines through you as the Shekinah shone through the temple of old.