

Galatians 1:18–2:10 — Leader / Learner Guide

Paul's Gospel Is Independent of the Judean Churches · TheGospelVault.com, @iJohn.316 (Instagram)

Big Idea and Context

Big idea: Paul's gospel never depended on Jerusalem. The Judean churches praised God for him, and the pillar apostles added nothing to his message and gave him the right hand of fellowship.

Paul is still proving the source of his gospel (1:11–2:21). Here he walks through his early Jerusalem visits under oath (1:20).

- **Visit 1 (1:18–20; Acts 9:26–28):** three years after conversion, fifteen days with Peter; he also saw James.
- **Visit 2 (2:1–10; Acts 11:27–30):** the famine visit, fourteen years after conversion, with Barnabas and Titus.
- **Not here:** the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) had not happened yet. See the companion timeline, Paul's Five Visits to Jerusalem.

One Gospel — Three Anchor Verses

Verse	What it says	Teaching point
1:23–24	He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith ... they glorified God in me	The Judean churches confirmed Paul's gospel by praising God for him.
2:5	We did not yield submission even for an hour	Adding even one thing, like Titus's circumcision, makes it a false gospel.
2:6, 9	Added nothing to me ... gave me the right hand of fellowship	The pillars recognized the same gospel and the same power at work in Paul and in Peter.

Why it must be the famine visit: Paul swears he has listed every visit (1:20). If this were the Council, he would have quoted its letter (Acts 15:23–29), and the Council's rules about blood and things strangled are missing here.

"Lest I ... had run in vain" (2:2): Paul was not unsure of his gospel. He wanted to know if Jerusalem stood with him, or if he would be running uphill.

Teaching Flow

1. **Paul's Early Travels (1:18–24).** Fifteen days with Peter; then Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:29–30). The Judean churches did not know his face but glorified God for him (Acts 9:31).
2. **The Representatives and Reason (2:1–2).** Fourteen years later; Paul, Barnabas, and Titus, a Gentile; sent by revelation (Agabus, Acts 11:28) to deliver famine relief, then a private meeting about the gospel.
3. **The Ruse of the False Brethren (2:3–5).** They slipped in to spy out liberty and push for Titus's circumcision as a precedent. Paul did not yield for an hour.
4. **The Reaction of the Apostles (2:6–10).** They added nothing, saw one gospel for Jew and Gentile and the same power in Peter and Paul, gave the right hand of fellowship, and asked only that they remember the poor.

Clarify While Teaching

- **Fifteen days, not five:** 1:18 says Paul stayed with Peter fifteen days.
- **Barnabas:** he went with Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13–14), not the third.
- **Hellenists:** these were Greek-speaking Jews (Acts 9:29), the same kind of opponents who argued with Stephen (Acts 6:9).
- **The benevolence aside:** Sellers' view that the church cares first for its own fits 6:10 — do good to all, "especially to those who are of the household of faith." Present it with that balance.
- **"The ground is level at the cross":** a familiar saying; it is not certain Billy Graham originated it.

Discussion and Close

1. Paul refused to yield on even one small addition. What "small things" do people today attach to the gospel?
2. "Separate what you should do from what you have to do." How would you explain that difference to a new believer?
3. The Judean believers praised God for a former enemy. Is there someone whose conversion you would find hard to celebrate?

Close: Point ahead to 2:11–21: the gospel that Jerusalem confirmed is now tested at Antioch, when Paul must correct Peter to his face. The ground is level at the cross.

Full study: [Paul's Gospel Is Independent of the Judean Churches — Galatians 1:18–2:10](#) · Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers, [SellersBibleInstitute.com](#)