



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Galatians 1:18, 21 - 24; 2:1 - 10

1. Paul's Jerusalem Visits (Gal 1:18; 2:1-10) & the 'Hidden Years' (Gal. 1:21-24)
 - a. Paul's Chronology:
 - a. 30 Jesus Crucified
 - b. 33 Paul's Damascus Road Encounter
 - c. 36 Paul's 1st Jerusalem Visit (3 yrs. after Damascus Gal. 1:18)
 - d. Gal. 1:21-23 Paul's 'Hidden' ['Silent,' 'Unknown'] Years' in Syria & Cilicia (Tarsus) "Preaching the faith" (Gal. 1:23)
 - e. 46/47 Paul's 2nd Jerusalem Visit (Famine relief Acts 11:27-30 = Gal 2:1-10) (with Barnabas & Titus; 14 years after f. Damascus Gal. 2:1)
 - f. Damascus Gal. 2:1)
 - g. 47/48 First Mission Trip (Paul & Barnabas to Cyprus & Galatia)
 - h. 48 Back in Antioch: Men from Jerusalem arrive in Antioch (Acts 15:1); rival teachers in Galatia (Gal. 1:7)
 - i. 48 Paul writes Galatians; sets off for Jerusalem with Barnabas (Acts 15:2-4)
 - j. 48/49 Jerusalem Counsel (Acts 15:6-21) [N. T. Wright, Galatians, p. 86]
 - k. Note: "Richard Bauckham [also] identifies Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10) with the famine relief visit of Acts 11:29-30 [as does N. T. Wright]." [J. B. Tyson, "Acts...Christian Origins, Forum (2007) p. 182]
 - b. Paul's First Jerusalem Visit (Gal. 1:18-20)
 - a. "After 3 years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas [Peter] & I stayed with him 15 days... (Gal. 1:18)
 - c. Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10)
 - a. "Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also" (Gal. 2:1)
2. Paul's Work: the 'Hidden Years' in Syria & Cilicia (Gal. 1:21-23)
 - a. Hidden Years in Obscurity—"I remained personally unknown..." (Gal. 1:22)
 - b. Evangelizing, raising up churches (Gal. 1:21, 23)
 - a. "I went to the regions of Syria & Cilicia...The Judean churches...kept hearing, 'He who formerly persecuted us [i.e., Paul] now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy.'" (Gal. 1:21-23)

- b. John "Knox is convinced that most of Paul's evangelistic activity took place before his visit to Jerusalem described in Gal. 2:1-10. (John Knox, Chapters in the Life of Paul)." [J. B. Tyson, "Acts...Christian Origins, Forum (2007) p. 178]
- c. "Two obscure references in Acts point to the organization of churches in Cilicia at an earlier date. Among the addressees of...the Jerusalem council ['decree'] were the churches in Cilicia (Acts 15:23). Later Paul visited these same churches at the beginning of his 2nd ministry journey (Acts 15:41). Paul's relationship to these churches points to this apostle as their founder...Paul was apparently active in church planting during his so-called 'silent years'." [Mark Wilson, "Cilicia: First Christian Churches in Anatolia," Tyndale B., V. 54.1 (2003) p.]
- d. Mark Wilson asserts that "After his conversion & first visit to Jerusalem, Paul states, "I went to Syria & Cilicia." [Gal. 1:21]...At this juncture of his life, [Paul] spent 5 or more years in Cilicia. During this period he established the first churches in Anatolia at Tarsus [& other cities]... Evidence for this is found in Acts 15:41; at the outset of his 2nd ministry journey Paul passed through Cilicia to strengthen the churches there. The Cilician churches likewise were visited at the beginning of his 3rd journey to Ephesus. During this extended stay in the region Paul would...have strengthened his ties to [the city of] Tarsus & [the region of] Cilicia." [Mark Wilson, "WAS PAUL A CILICIAN, A NATIVE OF TARSUS?" p. 96]
- e. Jerusalem 'decree' sent: "To the brothers & sisters among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, & Cilicia" (Acts 15:23)
- f. On Paul's 2nd mission trip: "He traveled through Syria & Cilicia, strengthening the churches." (Acts 15:41)
- g. "In Acts, Paul's Cilician ministry is assumed to have occurred in the indefinitely lengthy interval between Acts 9:30 & 11:26... Luke here wanted to have readers who...read between the lines'." [Mark Wilson, "Cilicia," Tyndale B., V. 54.1 p.]
- h. "Hengel & Schwemer argue convincingly that Luke...took it for granted that Paul evangelized in Cilicia 'he [Luke] did not feel it necessary to mention the fact'." [Mark Wilson, "Cilicia," Tyndale Bulletin, V. 54.1, p.]
- c. Exalted Spiritual Experiences (2 Cor. 12:1-6)
 - a. Paul's "experience of being taken up to the 3rd heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-6), dated to 14 years prior to writing 2 Cor. from Macedonia around 56, clearly occurred during his time in Cilicia." [Mark Wilson, "Cilicia," Tyndale B., V. 54.1, p.]
 - b. "I know a man in Christ [Paul himself] who 14 years ago was caught up to the 3rd heaven..." (2 Cor. 12:2) Note: '14 years ago,' between AD 42-44 [in the 'Hidden Years'(?)] around Tarsus or Antioch, prior to his 1st mission journey ESV
- d. Sufferings for the Gospel (2 Cor. 1:24)
 - a. "In 2 Cor.1:23-29...Paul lists...trials, some...never mentioned...in Acts. V. 24 is...suggestive: 'five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.' ...39 lashes suggests...synagogue discipline...F. F. Bruce writes, 'It may well be that some of [these '5 times'] belong to this Cilician phase of his life'." [Mark Wilson, "Cilicia," Tyndale B., V. 54.1, p.]
 - b. "5 times I received [from] the Jews the 40 lashes less one.' (2 Cor. 11:24) The Jewish punishment of 39 lashes was given by the synagogue for false teaching, blasphemy, & serious lawbreaking, all of which could have been applied to Paul's preaching of the gospel, especially to Gentiles. It was the most severe beating allowed by Scripture (Dt. 25:1-3). ESV
 - c. Scholars speculate that "The synagogues beat Paul because he preached a circumcision-free gospel to synagogue-based Gentiles, known as 'God-fearers.' It appears that Paul subsequently built...Gentile churches from the God-fearers he had reached in the synagogues [of Cilicia & Syria]." [Paul Barnett, Short Book about Paul, p. 35]
- e. Formative, foundational, & Productive
 - a. "What is one to make of these...'hidden years'...[between] AD 36 & 48/49?...These 'unknown years' were very formative & productive years for the apostle Paul & the early church...[In this period] Paul was actively engaged in mission...& did not merely sit around waiting for another heavenly vision." [Arthur G. Patzia, Emergence of Church, pp. 94, 96]
 - b. "Paul sees his ['silent', 'hidden'] period as of one piece with his later westward missions in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, & Asia...(Rom. 15:19)...Paul makes no distinction between his ministry during the ['hidden'] years & the following decade of westward missions. His list of major sufferings in 2 Cor. 11-12 provides a global review of his entire ministry period [as]... a single entity." [Paul Barnett, Paul: Missionary of Jesus, p. 78]
 - c. "During this period [1st in Cilicia & later in Antioch/Syria] Paul was engaged for some considerable time in missionary work in the larger region...It must have been through that preaching he saw God working through him in effective mission among the Gentiles...[This ultimately] caus[ed] the issue of the terms of acceptance of Gentiles into the new [Jesus] sect to become a cause of sharp dispute (...Gal. 2:1-5)." [James Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, p. 372]
- f. Application
 - a. Preaching without fanfare
 - b. Not looking for fame or celebrity status
 - c. Negative examples e.g. Josh Harris

- a. Speaking and magazine editor while in his in teens
- b. At 21 wrote a best seller I Kissed Dating Goodbye (1M plus copies)
- c. At 29 became lead pastor of a mega-church
- d. In early 40's no longer identified as a Christian & divorced his wife of 20 years.
- e. Now a 'Message Coach' – “helping people to promote their voice” in essence how to promote yourself.
- f. “Behind every celebrity pastor is an adoring congregation that both loves & supports the celebrity atmosphere...It begins when a pastor has a driving ambition for fame, but it can't take root unless the congregation supports that ambition.”—Scot McKnight

3. Action in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)

a. Influx of Gentile Believers; Saul/Paul brought in (Acts 11:19-26)

- a. 19 Now those [believers] who had been scattered as a result of the persecution ...made their way as far as...Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. 20 But...some of them...began speaking to [pagan] Greeks also, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, & a large number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 News about them reached the church in Jerusalem, & they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as Antioch. 23 When he arrived & saw the grace of God, he was glad & encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord ...And large numbers of people were added to the Lord. 25 Then [Barnabas] went to Tarsus to search for Saul, 26 &... he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they [Barnabas & Saul] met with the church & taught large numbers. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.” (Acts 11:19-26 CSB)
- b. Note: “Greeks” Lit. Hellenists here means not just people from Greece but Greek-speaking Gentiles [non-Jews] ESV
- c. Saul/“Paul had gone to his native Tarsus (Acts 11:25) after his conversion (Acts 9:30). As a Diaspora Jew, he was particularly suited for the Gentile outreach. His year of participation in this mission in Antioch (probably in AD 45) prepared him & Barnabas for a much greater mission that would follow (Acts 13-14). ESV
- d. The large influx of Gentile believers meant that “The general question: on what terms Gentiles [non-Jews who believed] should be accepted into Christian fellowship had to be dealt with.” [L. J. Ogilvie, Preacher's Commentary, p.]

b. Famine Prophecy & Relief Mission to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30)

- a. “27 In those days...prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them...Agabus, stood up & predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the reign of Claudius. 29 Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers & sisters who lived in Judea. 30 They did this, sending it to the [Jerusalem] elders by means of Barnabas & Saul.” (Acts 11:27-30 CSB)
- b. Paul & Barnabas represented the Antioch church by conveying its offering to the Jerusalem church in a time of need. Paul says in Gal. 2:1 that this 2nd visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30) took place “after 14 years” (presumably 14 years after his conversion), which...places this visit in either AD 45, 46, or 47. Most believe these calculations of years were not made according to modern standards of counting (which...require 14 full years) but by ancient “inclusive” methods, in which part of a year was still counted as a year. Paul's “14 years” could have been as little as a month or two from the first year, plus 12 whole years, plus a month or two from the final year, giving about 12.5 years by modern reckoning. Likewise, the “after 3 years” of Gal. 1:18 could be as little as one & a half years. ESV
- c. Barnabas & Saul/Paul go to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30 = Gal 2:1)
 - a. “Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.” (Gal. 2:1)

4. Paul's Work Confirmed—His 2nd Visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1-10)

- a. “In Galatians 2, Paul recounts two episodes that proved to be of vital importance in shaping his ministry.” – Todd Still
- b. “Paul's purpose [in Gal. 1:18-2:1ff is to establish] his contacts with Jerusalem were minimal [which] requires that this list [of visits/contacts] is complete...His argument would be in jeopardy if he...failed to mention a visit; thus [in the 14+ yrs.] prior to writing Galatians, Paul made two, & only two, visits to Jerusalem.” [John Muddiman, Pauline Epistles, p. 40]
- c. “Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 I went up according to a revelation & presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain.” (Gal. 2:1-2)
- d. “I went up according to a revelation” (Gal. 2:2)
 - a. “Barnabas & Saul were sent from Antioch to Jerusalem with a gift of money for the Jerusalem believers [Acts 11:30]... I assume that this is the same visit that...Paul describes in Gal. 2:1-10. It makes sense. He went to Jerusalem, he says, 'by revelation,' presumably referring to the prophetic warning of Agabus.” [N. T. Wright, Paul: A Biography, p. 95]
- e. Famine relief (Acts 11), related to “remember the poor” (Gal. 2:10)

- a. Paul's "own account of the visit ends with the Jerusalem leaders urging him to... 'remember the poor.'" [Wright, Paul, 95]
- f. Paul sets before the Jerusalem leaders the gospel he preaches
- a. He is confident in his gospel, but is willing to be evaluated
- b. "Confident that he received his gospel by a revelation from Jesus, Paul does not mean to suggest doubt about its truth. But his evangelizing efforts would surely be undermined if he was not supported by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, & the unity of the church would be compromised." NIV Zondervan Study Bible.
- g. "not running in vain" (Gal. 2:2b)
- a. in vain. "Paul is not seriously imagining that he has actually been preaching a false gospel, but he would regard his work as in vain if it were to result in a divided church—a Gentile half & a Jewish half." [ESV]
- b. "Confident that he received his gospel by a revelation from Jesus, Paul does not mean to suggest doubt about its truth. But his evangelizing efforts would surely be undermined if he was not supported by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, & the unity of the church would be compromised." NIV Zondervan Study Bible.
- c. "In Gal. 2:1-10, Paul describes the conflict that arose from preaching his Torah-free gospel among the Gentiles. Such opposition leads Paul to contemplate the possibility that his work has been in vain (Gal. 2:2b) echoing... Isaiah 49:4. According to Gal. 2:11-21 the gospel itself is at stake in this conflict." [M. Harmon, *She Must & Shall God Free*, p. 250]
- d. "Did Paul really worry that his understanding of the gospel might be deficient? No. That is not what he means... By [that] time... he had thought the gospel through & through and had seen it at work... in human hearts & lives. He was not going to back down on the meaning of Jesus' death & resurrection and on the way this 'good news... shaped the community of Jesus' people..." [N. T. Wright, *Galatians*, p. 95]
- e. Paul probably understands that failure to receive the acknowledgement of the Jerusalem apostles would undermine his mission to build, & would mortally impede his vision for, the body of Christ, in which there was "neither Jew nor Greek," since all "are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28), resulting instead in 2 separate & divided churches, each with its own mission, & with Paul's maverick mission being seriously undermined by the lack of support from Jesus' own disciples & family." David deSilva. p. 173-174
- f. "So the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you." (Gal. 2:5)
- g. "Paul selects this episode... because he's aware that the Galatians need a standard for discerning the truth of the gospel beyond either himself or the rival teachers. His narrative of the agreement between himself & the Jerusalem 'pillars' accomplishes this goal." David deSilva p. 174
- h. Paul was preaching a circumcision-free gospel
- i. Bringing Titus – a test case. Resolution (Gal 2:3) Titus not compelled to be circumcised.
- a. "But we didn't... submit to these people for... a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you." (Gal. 2:5) "The 'truth of the gospel'... [is that due to] the death & resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit, the believing Gentiles are no longer impure & idolatrous pagans, but were fellow-members of the messianic family... This is not simply one 'implication' of the gospel... a 'sociological' corollary... [Rather,] it is at the heart of the gospel itself... That is the point of Galatians then. It is, arguably, the community-forming point now." [N. T. Wright, *Galatians*, p. 98]
- b. "The Titus incident [inserted here] provides a concrete e.g. that's particularly relevant to the Galatians... It... lets [Paul's] readers see... what was at stake when the Jerusalem apostles considered his gospel to the Gentiles." [T. Wiarda, "Plot," *TB.*, V. 55.2 (2004) p. 242]
- j. Paul's circumcision-free gospel & mission confirmed by the Jerusalem Apostles
- a. The second "visit that had bearing on [Paul's] relation with the Jerusalem apostles took place 14 years later [Gal. 2:1], when [Paul's] independent apostleship was acknowledged (Gal. 2:6-10) & his view of circumcision was likewise affirmed (Gal. 2:1-5)." [G. F. Hawthorne (ed.) *Dictionary of Paul & His Letters*, p.]
- b. "Paul pointed [out] his 14 years of independent ministry [including 'hidden years'] between his visits to Jerusalem... He functioned directly under Jesus' authority during that time, without the official ['oversight' of] Jerusalem. ... Having heard the gospel Paul was preaching, the apostolic band [in Jerusalem] recognized it as valid & parallel to theirs. They recognized his mission to the Gentiles as valid & parallel to their mission to the Jews." [Grant Osborne, *Galatians*, p.]
- c. "At Jerusalem it was agreed that the good news of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed & practiced without regard to circumcision... A central token of cultural capital within the Jewish tradition [i.e., circumcision] is here acknowledged to be disposable in the mission to the Gentiles... As Paul puts it later... 'both circumcision & uncircumcision mean nothing' (Gal. 6:15)... Either may be practiced, but... neither is to be insisted upon." [John Barclay, *Paul & Power of Grace*, p. 45]

5. Paul's Work Contested—Conflict/Opposition

- a. The catalyst for Paul's Letter to the Galatians: "In his absence, Paul...finds that his teachings are being challenged by others claiming to be Christian teachers who are encouraging the formerly pagan Galatians to be circumcised and observe other elements of Jewish law. Paul responds by vehemently [in his Letter] excoriating these false teachers, warning against circumcision, & asserting that Christians need not follow Jewish dietary laws. [From Jesus to Christ]
 - b. While Paul is presenting to the leaders another 'interest/lobby' group forces their way in
 - c. Their agenda is to add circumcision as a requirement for the Gentiles to become part of the people of God
 - d. Paul did not submit, he fought for the preservation of the "truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:5)
 - e. Special interest group/ false brothers added to the gospel
 - a. Don't realize that the age has changed. Death & resurrection is beginning of new age. A new creation has come. Adding Christ to old is not the 'truth of the gospel'.
 - f. To be part of the people of God, only believing & receiving the death & resurrection of Christ & the work of the Spirit is sufficient. Application: too easy to add things as requirements to be acceptable
 - a. Following a certain "extra teaching"
 - b. Following or acknowledging a certain ministry or person
 - c. Special practices, special language, special jargon
 - d. Special interest groups lobbying for some special practice/teaching
6. Result of this meeting
- a. Titus is not required to be circumcised.
 - a. "Titus – & so by implication all Gentiles – does not need to be circumcised. Or at least Paul, James, Peter, & John agree on this. There is, however, a group of 'false brothers' who continue to disagree. Paul regards the imposition of circumcision on Gentile Christians as 'slavery' producing betrayal of the freedom Christ has given." ESV Study Bible
 - b. His gospel was confirmed even though it was given independently.
 - c. Nothing needed to be added.
 - a. "Above all else Paul wanted to make it clear that the 'pillar apostles' [Peter, etc.] acknowledged the validity of his circumcision-free gospel to the Gentiles. That's where he wanted his readers to recognize the significance & force of Jerusalem's authority...Titus was not circumcised despite strong [pressure]...The pillars recognized...the effectiveness of Paul's mission...among the Gentiles, acknowledged its circumcision-free message to be directed...by God...They added nothing, no further content, request, instruction or requirement to the circumcision-free gospel." [James Dunn, Jesus, Paul, & the Law, p. 117]
 - d. They recognized Paul had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised just as Peter was for the circumcised.
 - a. "The Jerusalem apostles recognize the grace given to Paul & approve of his Gentile mission. ["One central plot unifies this section...that Paul & his gospel are approved by the Jerusalem apostles, [is]...the narrative's primary emphasis." [Tim. Wiarda, "Plot," Tyndale Bulletin, V. 55.2 (2004) p. 243]
 - e. God was at work in both
 - f. He was given the right hand of fellowship
 - a. "Significantly, the 'pillars' had given the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas & Paul, signifying that they approved the...gospel as preached by Paul as well as his ministry to the Gentiles. Thus they validated Paul's apostleship by putting him on an equal footing with these other apostles in Jerusalem. This is significant, because it shows...neither Paul nor the Jerusalem apostles had to change their gospel message, but they were fully in agreement, & this "right hand of fellowship" gave clear expression to that agreement." ESV Study Bible
 - g. There is only one people of God based on the receiving of the same gospel
 - h. Mission Accomplished: "In Galatians [Paul] reports 'mission accomplished' and adds the only obligation was '...to remember the poor' (Gal. 2:10)" [Geoffrey W. Bromley (ed.) International Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, p. 199]
 - i. Application
7. Paul's attitude regarding influential people (Gal. 2:2, 6, 8)
- a. 'those who seemed influential' (Gal. 2:6) "Paul uses [this phrase]...for the purpose of relativizing the authority of the Jerusalem apostles (Betz)." [Brad McAdon, Rhetorical...Mitigation of Early Christian Conflicts, p. 179]

- b. "Four times [Paul] refers to the Jerusalem leaders as 'those with a reputation' (2:2, 6, 8)...ironically distancing himself from the honor associated with their status. Despite their credentials ('what they once were [now] makes no difference to me'), the essential fact is that 'God takes no account of human, external status' ['God doesn't show favoritism'] (Gal. 2:6). Once again Paul makes clear...God's criteria are 'not according to human norms'." [J. Barclay, Paul & Gift, p. 365]
- c. "Here [Gal. 2:6] Paul's language indicates...that at that time the Jerusalem apostles were accorded a status & authority...which is (now) a matter of indifference to him...& also that in his view the Jerusalem apostles were still accorded too high a status & authority by some—but not by God." [James Dunn, Jesus, Paul & the Law, p. 117]
- d. "By the time Paul wrote Galatians ['now'] he was no longer prepared to acknowledge the authority of Jerusalem to the same extent...The awkwardness of these verses is [because]...Paul was citing the backing of apostles whose authority in relation to his own mission...work he no longer acknowledged...What...brought about the change in Paul's attitude to the Jerusalem leadership...? The answer is almost certainly the incident at Antioch." [J. Dunn, Jesus, Paul & Law, pp. 121-2]
- e. What made them influential?
 - a. Being with Jesus
 - b. Strong leaders
- f. God has no favorites, no partiality
- g. Paul is not inferior – 2 Cor. 12:11
- h. Past experience does not make someone special
- i. Application:
 - a. Paul's pattern—acknowledgment/respect depends on leaders' "walking in step with gospel truth" (Gal. 2:14)
 - b. Tendency among Christians in the west to exalt leaders.
 - c. Churches defined by their leaders
 - d. Problem of leaders exalting themselves & people putting leaders on pedestals.
 - e. Christianity's Culture of "Celebrity Pastors" & "adoring Congregations"
 - a. "Behind every celebrity pastor is an adoring congregation that both loves & supports the celebrity atmosphere...It begins when a pastor has a driving ambition for fame, but it can't take root unless the congregation supports that ambition." [Scot McKnight, A Church Called Tov, p. 18]