

1. Making sense out of Galatians 2 and Acts 9, 11 & 15.

a. **1st Jerusalem visit.** Acts 9

• **Barnabas had to explain that Paul had:**

- 1) Seen Jesus,
 - 2) Spoken to Jesus,
 - 3) Preached Jesus boldly.
- Nothing about the content of Paul’s Gospel.

b. **2nd Jerusalem visit.** Acts 11.

• **Purpose of 2nd visit:**

- ✓ Deliver famine relief
- ✓ Private consultation with James, Peter and John so as “*not run in vain*”
- ✓ “*Set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles.*”
- ✓ Combat false brothers ... “*we did not yield in submission even for a moment*”
- ✓ “*When they perceived the grace that was given to me ... They gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me that we should go to the Gentiles.*”
- ✓ The content of Paul’s Gospel is not stated.

c. **Peter’s “relapse” or lack of understanding: Galatians 2:11-14**

“When (Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face ... ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ ... so that even Barnabas was led astray ... ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile ... how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?’ ”

d. **3rd Jerusalem visit (Acts 15): The question: “Can you be saved if you are not circumcised?”**

- **“The Apostles and elders with the whole Church ... having come to one accord” re the the Gospel: “we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus”**

2. Summary of the Impossible and Amazing Gospel Paul received: Galatians 2:16.

- a. **“We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”**
- b. **Self-justification by Works: the default understanding of unregenerate man.** “*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*” 1 Corinthians 2:14.

3. The Church’s understanding is often behind the curve of God’s revelation.

a. Examples in Church history:

- **Nicea (325 AD):** 1/3 of the bishops were orthodox; 1/3 Arians & 1/3 undecided.
- **Thomas Cranmer: Strasburg 1531; Reformed Anglicanism in 1547.**
- **Pentecostal revival in 1900; Mainline churches in the 1960s.**
- **Reformed faith in my own church**

b. What to do while you’re waiting for the Church to catch-up with God’s revelation?

- **First, believe that unity is an essential.** Truth ranks first, but unity is not far behind. **James 3:17.** *“The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable ...”*
 - Unity among Christians reflects the unity of the **three persons of the Trinity.**
 - John 17:21. *“... that they may all be one ... that they may become perfectly one ... so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”*
 - **Psalm 133:1.** *“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”*
 - **2 Corinthians 13:11.** *“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration (perfected), comfort one another, agree with one another (be of the same mind), live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”*
 - **Ephesians 4:1-6.** *“I urge you ... to bear with one another in love, ...³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*
 - **1 Peter 3:8-9.** *“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind ...”*
- **Next, make a pledge that divorce is not an option, except for scriptural reasons:** Infidelity & “Pauline exception” (*“If the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”* (1 Corinthians 7:15, 16)
- **During the 16th century Reformation and before, many of the Reformers did not leave the Roman Church; the Roman Church excommunicated them.**

4. In the end, personal revelation or interpretation must stand-up to the scrutiny of Scripture and be accepted by the whole Church

- a. *“I ... set before them ... the gospel ... in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain (empty, worthless).” Galatians 2:2*
- b. *“It seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church ... both the apostles and the elders ... having come to one accord ... it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ...” Acts 15*