

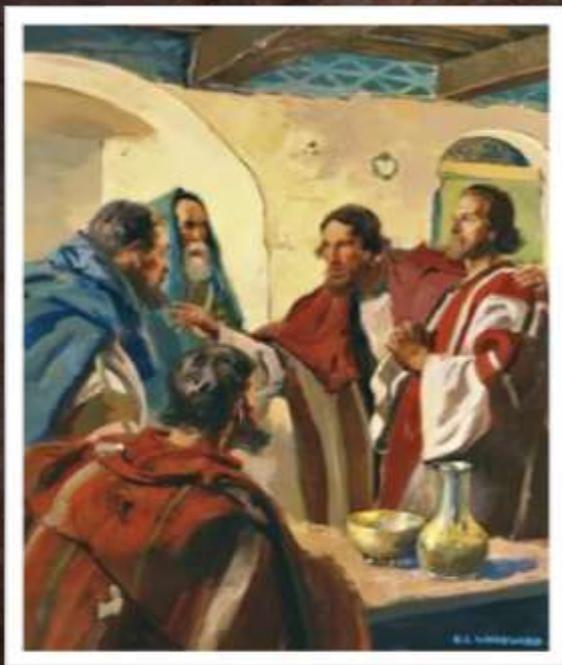


THE UNITY OF THE GOSPEL

Crowds of Gentiles joined the Church, and that was a great blessing. However, that brought some problems too.

The Jewish understood they should keep the traditions of their parents. Paul thought they didn't have to force the Gentiles to cling to them.

The Judaizers taught salvation by the works of the law while Paul taught salvation by faith only. The confrontation of those two teachings threatened the unity of the newborn Church.



a) Seeking unity. Galatians 2:1-3.

b) False brothers. Galatians 2:4-5.

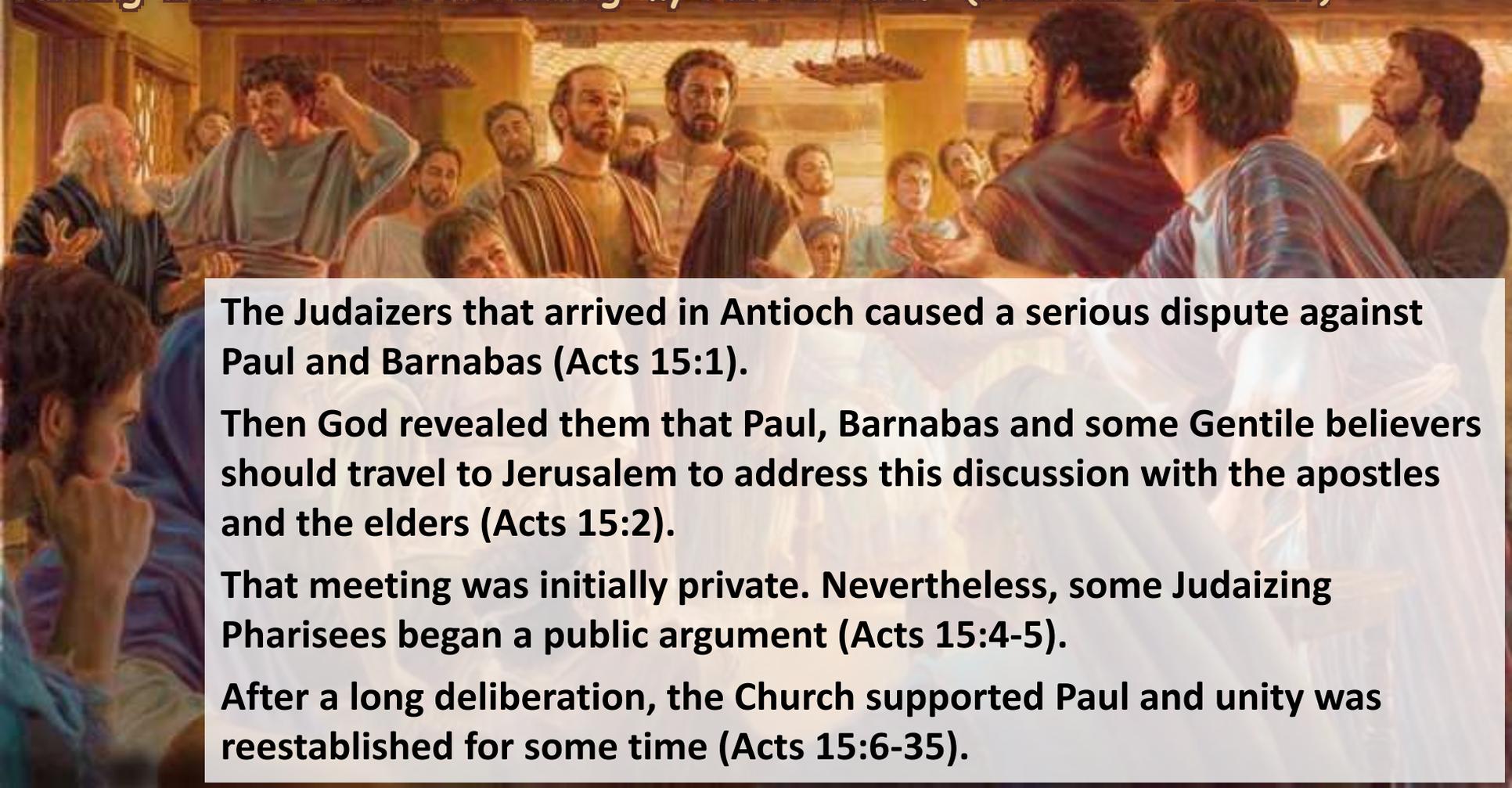
c) Unity in diversity. Galatians 2:6-10.

d) Confrontation in Antioch. Galatians 2:11-13.

e) Facing confrontation. Galatians 2:14.

SEEKING UNITY

“Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.” (Galatians 2:1-2 NIV)



The Judaizers that arrived in Antioch caused a serious dispute against Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:1).

Then God revealed them that Paul, Barnabas and some Gentile believers should travel to Jerusalem to address this discussion with the apostles and the elders (Acts 15:2).

That meeting was initially private. Nevertheless, some Judaizing Pharisees began a public argument (Acts 15:4-5).

After a long deliberation, the Church supported Paul and unity was reestablished for some time (Acts 15:6-35).

FALSE BROTHERS (1)

“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” (Galatians 2:4-5)



Paul opposed the false brothers that insisted on forcing the Gentiles to circumcise (Acts 15:1).

Circumcision was a rite ordered by God, how could it be wrong?



Outward circumcision was to be a symbol of circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16, 30:6, Jer. 4:4, Rom. 2:29). It represents a stripping away of our confidence in ourselves and a faithful dependence on God instead.

Making any rite a requisite for salvation is to deny the redeeming power of Christ’s sacrifice.

There’s nothing we can do to gain salvation. Salvation is a free gift from Jesus.



“The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.”

FALSE BROTHERS (2)

“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” (Galatians 2:4-5)



The teaching of the false brothers was trying to exchange the “liberty which we have in Christ Jesus” for slavery.

What does “liberty in Christ” mean?

Everyone is a slave, since we are slaves of sin (John 8:33-34; Romans 6:17).

Freedom for the Christian is the opportunity to live a life of unhindered devotion to God. It involves freedom from being enslaved to the desires of our sinful nature, freedom from the condemnation of the law, and freedom from the power of death.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

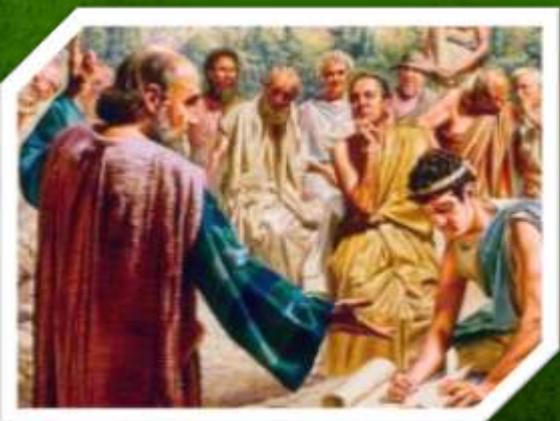
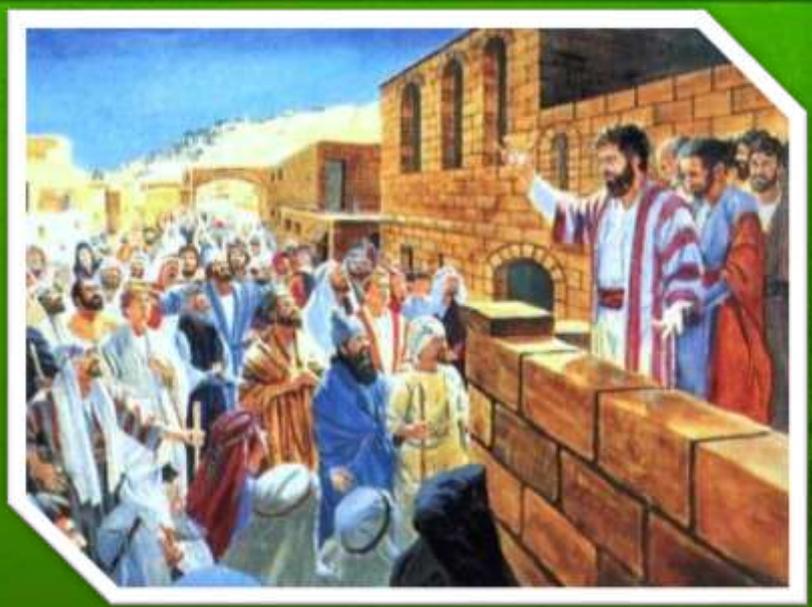
“For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.” (Galatians 2:8 NIV)

As Paul explained, there’s only one Gospel (Galatians 1: 6-9). However, not everyone receives it the same way.

The Jewish had a strong biblical foundation, so they could accept Jesus as the Messiah because He fulfilled everything that was revealed in the Word.

That ministry was entrusted to Peter.

The Gentiles had to be reached by different means.



Paul was prepared to reach those who didn’t know the truth before. The Gentiles ministry was entrusted to him.

Paul, Peter and other apostles used different styles, but the message was the same.



CONFRONTATION IN ANTIOCH

“For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.”

(Galatians 2:12 NIV)

God showed Peter a vision, then he stopped considering the Gentiles unclean and began to mingle with them (Acts 10).

That’s why Peter pluckily lived with Gentiles when he was visiting the Church in Antioch.

Nevertheless, when some Jews came from Jerusalem, he stopped mingling with the Gentiles to please those Jews. His hypocritical attitude influenced the other Jews in the Church.



If his attitude had persisted, the Church would have been severely split.

FACING THE CONFRONTATION

“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’” (Galatians 2:14)



Peter eating with the Jews from Jerusalem was not the main issue, but that he was deliberately distancing himself from the Gentiles and not allowing them to eat with the Jews.

His acts arose the question, were the Gentiles second-class Christians?

The most sensitive Gentiles thought that they should become Jews to be Christians (accepting the doctrine of the false brothers).

Paul’s confrontation was necessary and clear. Peter’s response was not registered in the Bible, but it is obvious that he accepted Paul’s appeal and he changed his attitude.

The unity of the Church and the Gospel overcame.

“False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. He greatly desired that the false teachers might be separated from the church, but their influence had affected so many of the believers that it seemed hazardous to take action against them. There was danger of causing strife and division which would be ruinous to the spiritual interests of the church. He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love... They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.”