

Sunday, December 11, 2022—Galatians 2:11-14 Paul Withstands Peter

Galatians 2:11

- **But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.**
- The events of verses 11-14 fit into the period between the end of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 and the split between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41. We know this because Barnabas was still with Paul in Galatians 2:13.
- So, this incident that took place in Antioch occurred after Peter, James, and John had extended the right hand of fellowship and agreed to limit their ministry to the Little Flock.
- Acts 15:23-31—one should not assume that just because official letters were drafted and sent to the church in Antioch that the trouble the legalizers were causing ceased.
- Peter at some point had gone to Antioch; however, we do not know the reason why Peter went.
- Paul says that he “withstood him Peter to the face.” The Greek word translated “withstood” means “to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, or oppose,” according to *Strong's Concordance*.
 - Ephesians 6:13—“withstand”
 - II Timothy 3:8
 - II Timothy 4:15
- Galatians 2:11—the reason Paul had a face-to-face confrontation with Peter, according to this verse, is because Peter was “to be blamed.” That is to say, Paul found fault with something Peter had done and confronted him on the issue.

Galatians 2:12

- **For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.**
- Peter was from Jerusalem where he was used to being around Jewish Kingdom saints most of the time. Going to Antioch, the base of operations for Paul's Gentile ministry and apostleship, certainly would have been an interesting experience for Peter. At Antioch, Peter would have been in an environment where Jews and Gentiles were fellowshiping openly with one another.
- As the verse indicates, before men came to Antioch from James, Peter ate and fellowshiped freely with the Gentile believers.
- Once the men from James arrived, Peter withdrew his fellowship from the Gentiles because he was afraid of what they might report to James.

- Acts 21:18-21—James seems to have never fully understood some things regarding what God was now doing through Paul in forming the church the Body of Christ.
- Peter in this case was more worried about pleasing men (James) than doing what was right according to his previous agreement with Paul.

Galatians 2:13

- **And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**
- Peter's actions caused other Jewish believers to follow his actions.
- The Greek word rendered “dissembled” in the King James means “to act hypocritically with”. According to Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* the English word means, “concealed under a false appearance; disguised.” In short, these Jews were acting hypocritically by following Peter's lead.
- Until now, Antioch had been a model of what the relationship should be between believing Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Christ should look like. From all appearances, it was a smoothly operating assembly where all the believers were one in Christ.
- Notice how the arrival of the men from James affected the church in Antioch. Saints who were grounded and understood certain issues became confused and moved away from the truth of the gospel. This is what unsound doctrine does; it threatens to destabilize grounded people
- **Dissimulation**—is an important word to define in this context. The Greek word carries the idea of “the acting of a stage player” or “hypocrisy.” The word is elsewhere rendered “hypocrisy” most often by the King James translators.
 - Matthew 23:28
 - Mark 12:15
 - Luke 12:1
 - I Peter 2:1
- Noah Webster defines the English word as follows:
 - “The act of dissembling; a hiding under a false appearance; a feigning; false pretension; hypocrisy. dissimulation may be simply concealment of the opinions, sentiments or purpose; but it includes also the assuming of a false or counterfeit appearance which conceals the real opinions or purpose. dissimulation among statesmen is sometimes regarded as a necessary vice, or as no vice at all.”
 - Romans 12:9

- Peter’s horrible example had so divided the church at Antioch that even Barnabas separated himself from the Gentiles. Barnabas had been Paul’s partner on his first apostolic journey to establish Gentile churches in Galatia. Barnabas had gone with Paul to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 and had been given the right hand of fellowship to preach the Gospel of the Uncircumcision unto the Gentiles. Now, Barnabas refused to fellowship with the Gentiles because of the bad example given by Peter.

Galatians 2:14

- **But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel,**
- Those who “disassembled” with Peter from the Gentiles were not walking in accordance with the truth of Paul’s gospel. Paul preached a gospel which taught that there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles and that both could be reconciled to God in one body by the cross.
 - Galatians 3:26-28
 - Ephesians 2:13-18
- They were not walking according to the truth of the gospel because they were making distinctions between men when Paul said there are none.
- **I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?**
- Paul publicly rebukes Peter in front of the crowd. Paul was never afraid to stand for the truth.
- Paul basically says to Peter, “get it straight.” If you are going to live like the Jews, then live like the Jews, but do not live in such a way that it is going to cause the Gentiles to live like Jews.
- Peter clearly knew that what Paul was telling him was correct because he offers no defense for his behavior.

An Important Difference

- One subject that the opponents of mid-Acts dispensationalists will often use to try to trip us up is Peter’s visit with Cornelius in Acts 10. We must always remember that Peter was not sent to a single Gentile until after Paul had already been saved and receiving revelation for at least three years.
- Acts 10—Peter did not want to go eat with Cornelius because he was a Gentile.
- Acts 11:2—when Peter returned to Jerusalem after ministering to Cornelius, they that were of the circumcision contended with him.
- Acts 11:4-18—Peter then rightly defends his actions in Jerusalem.

- In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul rebukes Peter because he stopped eating with Gentiles at Antioch. Peter had no defense to offer because he was wrong. If there was someone who should have known better, it was Peter; he had already seen the vision of the sheet in Acts 10.
- This comparison clearly demonstrates that a dispensational change was already underway well before Acts 28.