

Galatians 2:11-14a
Paul's Authentic Apostleship part 2

Purpose: to show that Paul's apostolic authority is equal to other apostles, especially to those who were being overcome by hypocrisy.

Introduction: It was an awkward moment, to say the least. It's always embarrassing when a disagreement breaks out at church, but this one was a real doozy. For one thing, it apparently took place during a church fellowship meal, where everyone was supposed to be having, well, fellowship. For another thing, the 2 parties were church leaders. The battle was completely unexpected. The two men had been friends for a several years. In fact, the last time they were together, one had given the other the right hand of fellowship. But now there's conflict. (based on Ryken)

In this section we will learn if Paul's apostleship is truly on equal footing with Peter's. We will also find that it is Peter himself who inconsistently applies Biblical truth. But how was this conflict handled? What was said? And why was this all done in front of everyone?

Paul confronted Peter personally & publicly—2:11 *I opposed him to his face,*

- 1) What? lit. **"to his face** (emphatic) *I opposed* [ἀνθίστημι] *him*"
 - a) No open letters, no internet blogging, no gossiping
- 2) When? ¹¹ *Now when Peter came to Antioch,*
 - a) This visit is not recorded in Acts
 - i) Probably **after** the first church planting trip (fall 49 AD)
 - b) Antioch is the 3rd largest city in the Empire (ca. ¼ million +) at this time, with @ 10% of the population being Jews.
- 3) Why? *because* [ὅτι] *he stood condemned* [pluperfect periphrastic; impf. act. ind. εἰμί + pf. pass. ptc. καταγινώσκω] (before God);
- 4) See the grace of God to Paul here. Paul has a reputation for being wimpy (2nd Corinthians 10:10). He seems to have overcome that in this case.

What was so important that Paul would confront Peter publicly?—2:12 ¹² for [γάργ] ...
[3 imperfect verbs describing Peter's behavior]

- 1) Peter's habit rooted in faith—*he had been* (regularly) *eating* [Ⓛ impf. act. ind. συνεσθίω] *with the Gentiles* (i.e. eating the same food as and with the Gentile believers).
 - a) When? *before certain people came from Jacob/James* (the apostle),
 - i) Perhaps this is the same group summarized in Acts 15:1?
- 2) Peter's hypocrisy rooted in fear—*he* (gradually) *withdrew* [Ⓜ impf. act. ind. ὑποστέλλω] *and separated/isolated* [Ⓝ impf. act. ind. ἀφορίζω] *himself,*
 - a) When? *But when they arrived,*
 - b) Why? *fearing* [pres. dep. ptc. φοβέω] *the circumcision* (possibly unsaved Jews).

- i) Perhaps Peter gradually shifted where he was sitting, without too many noticing, until Paul himself did. Or maybe it took place over a couple of days.
 - ii) Remember, Peter had already been criticized about this (Acts 11:1-3).
 - iii) Have **you** ever struggled with what other Christians might think of you?
 - iv) Here's a principle to remember: when the fear of people overcomes the fear of God, we are likely to deny the Gospel.
- 3) The real issue?—he struggled with a double standard of eating with the Gentiles when the Jews were not around and then drawing back from doing so when the circumcision group came to Antioch. This hypocrisy brought confusion to others and tempted them to be hypocrites too.
- a) Remember that Peter has already had the vision and teaching described in Acts 10-11 approximately 8-9 years earlier in 40-41 AD. Consider his words in Acts 10:28.
 - b) This seems to be a concern over moral contamination by being in the presence of Gentiles at a meal rather than simply eating a kosher meal.
 - c) Have you ever struggled to consistently obey a Biblical truth you have been taught?
 - d) A teacher's life must embody a level of godliness adequate to demonstrate the meaning of his teaching—a way of life dramatically different from that of the sinful. (Frame)

Notice the domino effect Peter's sin has on others?—2:13

- 1) Effected the average believer—¹³ *And the rest of the Jews* (i.e. Jewish believers) *joined with him in hypocrisy* [συνυποκρίνομαι],
 - a) Everything a Christian does affects someone else for benefit or detriment.
 - b) Remember Romans 14:7.
- 2) Effected the leaders—*so that* [ὥστε] *even Barnabas* (Paul's coworker) *was lead astray* [aor. pass. ind. συναπάγω] *with their hypocrisy* [ὑπόκρισις].
 - a) Barnabas seems not to have played a deliberate role in the hypocrisy, but he was caused to stagger in his Christian walk.
 - b) Perhaps this still weighs on Peter's mind as he uses the same word [συναπάγω] when he writes 2nd Peter 3:17?
 - e) Teachers have a greater accountability and judgment because of their influence on others (James 3:1). In a real sense, Peter was morally responsible for the sins of others. Peter's public, ongoing sin demands public confrontation and public repentance. When men fall into doctrinal and personal sin, they usually take others with them.

But how did Paul address Peter's hypocrisy?—2:14a *I said to Peter in front of them all,*

- 1) What simulated Paul's response?—2:14a ¹⁴ *But* [ἀλλά] *when I saw that they were not being straightforward* [ὀρθοποδέω] *about* [πρός] (in relation to) *the truth of the gospel,*
 - a) Peter was, after all, one of the "pillars" (cf. 2:9)

- b) Paul does not follow Matthew 18:15-17, but rather the concepts later recorded in 1st Timothy 5:19-20.
- 2) Next time I will address the content of Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch of Syria.
- 3) Still, some questions remain, such as:
 - a) Do Peter and Barnabas ever repent of this action?
 - b) What impact does this have on the strong disagreement later in Acts 15 concerning John Mark?

Let me illustrate this with another story related by Pastor Philip Ryken:

Prior to the Civil War, it was customary for Southern Presbyterian elders to give their church members tokens signifying that they were eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper. Sadly, in some churches African slaves were not given the customary silver token, but one made of a lesser metal. Nor were the slaves allowed to receive the elements until all the white church members have been served. This was a divisive and prejudicial way of handling an ordinance that God intends to signify our union together in Christ.

Take-home truth: the Gospel itself requires a certain kind of conduct. We each need to ask ourselves, "Does my lifestyle consistently match my message?"