

PAUL'S CONTACTS AT JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION: Paul feels compelled to tell his story regarding his connection with Peter and the church in Jerusalem. He is obviously combatting some wrong information being fed the Galatians by the Judaizers, so he's setting the record straight.

Galatians 1:18-13

I. PAUL MEETS PETER vv. 18-19

A. There is some debate regarding the 3 year timeline.

1. Most scholars agree that this most likely meant it was 3 years after his conversion experience.
2. When we look at Paul's timeline, as he states in verses 17 and 18, it's unclear how much time he was in Arabia and how much time in Damascus.
3. In the book of Acts, it appears that his conversion and preaching in Damascus happened simultaneously. *Acts 9:19-20*

B. It's interesting that he only saw Peter and James.

1. One reason may have been the fear the other Apostles had regarding Paul's past. *Acts 9:26*
2. The other reason is that the Apostles had begun to spread out to share the gospel. *Acts 8:14-15*
3. To see Peter, however, was important, because it connected him with one who had spent personal time with Jesus. *1 Corinthians 15:6, 1 Corinthians 11:23*

C. Paul points out that he was there for a very short time.

1. This means that he could hardly have been mentored by Peter as an apostle.
2. This points back to *Galatians 1:1 and 1:12*.
3. A special note is given to James the brother of Jesus, who at this point is counted among the Apostles. *Matthew 13:55, James 1:1*

II. HIS EMPHASIS ON HONESTY v.20

- A. Paul's needs them to know that he is giving them honest details on how everything happened.
 - 1. When he is saying "before God", he's basically placing himself into the judgement and examination by God. *Romans 1:9*
 - 2. He's also saying that he and God are standing together on what is true. *1 Timothy 2:7, Philippians 1:20*
 - 3. It is a statement regarding Paul's personal character that he is not a liar.
- B. It's important for the sake of his calling coming directly from God.
 - 1. His accurate events of his travels are supporting arguments of the truth he is speaking.
 - 2. He knows that everything he is saying can be collaborated with those he mentions.
 - 3. Therefore, what he says about the revelation he received from the Holy Spirit must also be true.
- C. All of this is in response to the apparent lies that were being told about him.
 - 1. It is apparent that the Judaizers had been lying regarding Paul.
 - 2. The Judaizers were trying to convince the Galatians that they were simply preaching the true gospel.
 - 3. This was their effort to say that their gospel was superior to Paul's, because it was what Jesus intended.

III. THE APPROVAL OF THE CHURCH vv. 21-24

- A. He leaves after this short period and continues preaching in other areas.
 - 1. He returns to regions of Syria and near his hometown of Tarsus in Celicia.
 - 2. He undoubtedly returned with increased knowledge and vigor regarding the person of Jesus Christ. *2 Peter 3:14-16*

3. There is no comment of Peter or James disapproving of his continued ministry.
- B. The vast majority of the church in Judea, did not know Paul personally.
1. He wasn't teaming up with the believers to preach the gospel in that region.
 2. Paul was not called to stay in Jerusalem.
 3. He was laser focused on his ministry to the Gentiles. *Romans 11:13, Acts 9:15, Acts 17:1-3*
- C. The Jerusalem church glorified God in Paul.
1. Paul's conversion was significant amongst the believers, knowing he once was their archenemy.
 2. This gave them hope that even the worst enemies of the church, could in fact be won over to Christ.
 3. Because of this, the church in Jerusalem praised God for what He did in Paul.

CONCLUSION:

In closing, let me make this interesting point.

All of these things that Paul is talking about in chapter one and in chapter two, transpired before he went to Galatia to establish churches.

When we add up the timeline, we see that it was 17 years before his conversion until the time he headed out on his missionary journey.