

- 6 *But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:*
- 7 *But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;*
- 8 *(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)*
- 9 *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*
- 10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.*
- 11 ¶ *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*
- 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.*
- 13 *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*
- 14 *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, 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?*
- 15 *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*
- 16 *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Galatians 2:6-11 We do know the identity of those that Paul speaks of in verses 6-10, even though we cannot exactly pinpoint the time that these events took place. It might have been before the Council of Jerusalem; during the Council of Jerusalem; or after the Council of Jerusalem. But we do know the results of the events. I will note them.

1. It seems that Paul's reference is to the Apostle's themselves, for they are mentioned: Peter and John with James the brother of the Lord. Peter is mentioned again in verse 11. Paul was rather irritated with them, because it seemed to him that there was too much honor given to the flesh: the honor that come from position that they held. "Seemed to be somewhat" "Seemed to be somewhat in conference": "Seemed to be pillars"
2. They added nothing to Paul. They did not instruct him in the faith; which was revealed by the Holy Spirit, as we have seen.
3. This shows that the word and actions of even the apostles were not inspired. It applies to the apostles what Paul said in chapter 1. Only the words given to them by God are inspired, and they have no authority to add or subtract from it. Not the angels, not the apostles, not Paul himself could change the message. The apostles were first, but were not superior to Paul.
4. Paul is not putting down the apostles, but is putting down what his adversaries said of the apostles; carnal men see only the office and the prestige; they do not see the spiritual realities.
5. This issue was: "Do the Gentile Christians have to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be good Christians?" Those who said yes, used the practice of the church in Jerusalem as an example and the practice of the apostles who lived there as evidence that this was the case.

6. This is true because in another context, Paul calls himself the least of the apostles, because he persecuted the church. This was no idle boasting that Paul was doing, but a refutation of the stupid arguments of his opponents.
7. The truth: The gospel receives its authority from God; not from men. This does not mean that the Gospel does not give authority to men, for Paul is very clear on that in other places; and even refers to his own authority.
8. Paul’s message and his apostolic office were affirmed by the church at Jerusalem. They would go to the circumcision—to the Jews; he to the Gentiles—the non Jews. This shows why they lived as the Jews did, because they realized that their mission was to the Jews. They did not live as the Jews did because they hoped thereby to be better Christians, but because their mission required it—it was in God’s will for them.
9. Even our Lord set example here. He is the Son of God, and does not need testimony from men. But when he was among men, he accepted the testimony of John the Baptist and the witness of Angels. He did not receive his authority from them, because he was the Son of God from eternity; but these things are for our benefits. In the same way the apostles understood that the message of Christ was from heaven, but they used earthly means in order to smooth the way for that gospel to be preached, and lived like Jews among the Jews. But they also recognized that there might be a different way for Paul, who would go to the Gentiles.
10. James, Peter, John were apostles to the Jews. How then can Peter be the first Pope of the Romans. How can John’s church be the universal church of love? Should not Paul’s church be the universal church of God? In reality, they are all ours, and all belong to the church, for there is no church of Paul, or of Peter, or of John, or even of Christ as pertaining to the flesh. It is by His Word and Spirit that the church is formed, and it does not depend upon people according to the flesh.
11. Circumcision or uncircumcision in itself is nothing, as Paul would write to the Corinthians, but it becomes a very great thing if it becomes a requirement for good Christianity.

Galatians 2:12-16: The confrontation in Antioch.

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1. Peter’s hypocrisy. His change of behavior when people came from Jerusalem. Peter probably had the very best of motives. He did not want to offend the church of Jerusalem. This passage gives some idea that these events had happened before the 15th chapter of Acts—before the great Council of Jerusalem, for Peter would probably not have acted this way after the decision of that council. If it was after the council, then Peter’s fault would be even greater. But truth does not depend upon the decisions of church councils.

2. It was forbidden under the law to eat with Gentiles, and Peter was acting like a Jew, not a Christian. Question: does baptism remove the requirements of Moses? Yes, of course, according to Colossians 2.
3. Barnabas himself was carried off by the “dissimulation” or the “play acting.” Pretending something that you do not believe. There is a very fine line between accommodating yourself to weakness, and pretending to be something you are not. Peter and Barnabas passed over this line, threatening to divide the very church itself. For the church at Antioch was in danger of being divided into the “Really-good” circumcised Christians, and those lesser Christians who were not circumcised—the law keepers, and the non-law-keepers. It is used twice in verse 13. The first time it means to play acts, the second time it means to act with the playactor. It means to pretend one motive, when in reality you have another. Peter pretended to act with regard to the law of Moses, when in reality he was acting in fear of those who were the enemies of Paul and enemies of the liberty of men in Christ.
4. “according to the truth of the Gospel”: also could mean “advancing in the direction of the truth” Peter’s action tended toward denial of the Gospel. It meant that he was not acting honestly and openly. He was play acting. The mask must be taken off the play-acting of Peter and the others.
5. Paul’s rebuke was before them all. Everyone knew that Peter lived like a Gentile in Antioch—not according to the Jews. Even before he had received his vision concerning Cornelius, he lived with a tanner in Joppa, and tanners were unclean establishments to the Jew. Peter was embarrassed and exposed for his hypocrisy. Paul did not consult Peter’s feelings or his reputation, but contended for the truth of the Gospel.
6. At the same time, we must not believe that Paul and Peter disagreed with respect to the doctrine of Christ—this had to do with practice and prudence. Paul understood this better than Peter—we also know that there is no record of Peter defending himself, and claiming that his action was right. What a devastating passage this is for Rome and the Popes. The infallible first Pope being caught in actions which had the effect of denying the Gospel of Christ.
7. We must not withdraw fellowship from those who are Christians, period. If we do, we do it because we esteem them to be second-class Christians, because of something which is not essential. If you can accept a man as a Christian then you are bound to fellowship with him in Christ.

Verse 15, 16. The heart of Paul’s argument.

1. “Jews by nature” not “sinners of the Gentiles.” The Jew had many advantages, in that to them were promised the blessings of Christ. These blessings did not come by the law of Moses considered in terms of rites and ceremonies and good deeds, but through Christ. The whole law was for the purpose of bringing men to the faith of Christ.
2. Paul to Peter: Act like what you really are: Men are free in Christ. There is one church and one baptism, and one Lord and one God. Don’t divide the church by imposing a principle that you do not accept yourself.

We will see the evidence of this in the next sermon.