

## Chapter 6

# FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER PAUL'S SALVATION

*Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 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: but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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 [Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. (Galatians 2:1-10)*

Paul's reference to this visit to Jerusalem, *fourteen years after*, is a very significant reference to time in the life of Paul and also in the history of the church. It gives us a means of determining the year of Paul's salvation. By analysis, these fourteen years count from the time of his salvation just as the reference to *three years after*, discussed earlier, also counted from his

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

salvation. Consequently from this reference to the fourteen years we know the year of Paul's salvation and we know the year he departed with Barnabas to Asia for their first missionary journey. As discussed earlier, we know Herod Agrippa I died in 44 A.D., while Barnabas and Paul were in Jerusalem providing relief for the dearth predicted by Agabus. By comparing the book of Acts with the book of Galatians, we are able to determine Paul's reference to going up to Jerusalem *by revelation*, in his letter to the Galatians, corresponds with the events recorded in the eleventh chapter of the book of Acts, when James was put to death by Herod; Peter was imprisoned and released by the angel; and Herod was smitten of the Lord and died, being eaten of worms.

Thus, by counting backwards from 44 A.D., we know Paul was saved in 30 or 31 A.D., depending upon inclusive or exclusive reckoning. We also know he departed on his first missionary journey following Herod's death in 44 A.D. and that he and Barnabas returned to Antioch, where he wrote the epistle to the Galatians before he made his third journey to Jerusalem (after his salvation) for the council to answer the Judaizers:

And there [in Antioch] they abode long time with the disciples. And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Acts 14:28; 15:1-2)

These visits and their timing are extremely important to Paul's purpose in his letter to the Galatians: of the reestablishment of the authority of his gospel; of the proof of his apostleship before the churches of Galatia; and of the suppression of the heresy. These visits to Jerusalem establish, without doubt, that Paul was the apostle chosen to replace the fallen Judas, and that his

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

apostleship was *not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead*. Paul's third visit to Jerusalem is not mentioned in his letter to the Galatians, because it took place after he had completed his missionary journey; after he had written his letter to the Galatians; and after he *rebuked Peter to the face*. We mention his third visit because it is commonly and erroneously associated with the events of *fourteen years after*.

When Paul visited Jerusalem, fourteen years after his salvation, it was following a *whole year* of ministry in the church in Antioch in Syria with Barnabas. It was during that period of time that Titus, a Greek and later minister to the Corinthians, was saved. When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem, with the offering from Antioch, they took Titus with them. Even though Titus had been saved for no more than a year, he had already shown evidence of the spiritual gifts necessary to be a minister of Jesus Christ. He had shown the apostles and the church at Antioch great promise for the work of the Lord among the Gentiles. This is, perhaps, the reason they brought him with them to Jerusalem. Titus was a sort of *firstfruits* to Paul and Barnabas' proposed ministry among the Gentiles of Asia. Titus was a perfect illustration of the truth Paul was endeavoring to convey in his letter to the Galatians. He was a Gentile saved by grace, apart from the deeds of the law. Thus Paul wrote:

... fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation [i.e., the revelation of Agabus concerning the dearth], and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. (Galatians 2:1-2)

In this portion of his letter to the Galatians Paul reveals the circumstances of his second visit to Jerusalem: that this was basically a private meeting with Peter, James and John and not the

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

more public meeting of the council recorded in Acts fifteen. Further Paul wrote, *I went up by revelation...* Luke, the writer of the book of Acts and a later companion of Paul, supplies us with details not supplied by Paul to the Galatians, which preceded this visit and the details of the *revelation* that led to the visit:

Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:25-30)

These were the events which brought Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem in 44 A.D.: at the time when James the brother of John was put to death by Herod; Peter was imprisoned and later released by the angel of the Lord; and Herod was eaten of worms and died. These were some of the events which occurred *fourteen years after* Paul's salvation and clearly establish the time frame for the writing of the book of Galatians while Paul was in Antioch in Syria, following his first missionary journey into Asia, which had begun in 44 A.D.

Paul referred to Titus in his letter to the Galatians because he was an important part of the reason Paul went to Jerusalem, besides providing relief for the dearth. There is no Scriptural evidence, prior to Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, to suggest that any other converts from among the Gentiles (including those of the household of Cornelius) were ever brought to Jerusalem before the church. Paul apparently felt that for the health of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church, it was important to take Titus with him. Paul's assessment was certainly correct,

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

because there were certain ones in the church at Jerusalem who were persuaded, even to the extent of violating the liberty of the apostles, to determine whether Titus had been circumcised; and if not, to compel him to be circumcised. Thus Paul wrote the Galatians of this violation of their dignity and liberty:

But ... Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled [by the unscriptural arguments of the Judaizers] to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. (Galatians 2:3-4)

Paul used these events not only to show his authority, but to establish the fact of the truth of the gospel. Thus he wrote: *To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with [i. e., for the benefit of] you* (Galatians 2:5).

Paul also showed them, before he ever left on his first missionary journey into Asia, he had already been confronted with the *other gospel* of the Judaizers (whom he labeled as *false brethren* in his letter to the Galatians), and he had taken his stand for the truth of the saving grace of Jesus Christ, so that when the gospel was taken into Asia, it was the unadulterated truth he had received by the direct revelation of His Lord in Arabia. He made this abundantly clear to the Galatians when he said that he had communicated the gospel (which he had been preaching and was preaching to the Gentiles) to Peter, James and John.

Paul did not go to Jerusalem seeking the approval of the apostles, but for fellowship in the truths he had learned from his Lord and had shared with Peter on his previous visit eleven years earlier. This fellowship was for the benefit of all. Paul further testified to the Galatians that he was not impressed with the mock authority and puffed-up manner of those who had *spied out their liberty* that they might rejoice in the flesh of Titus, by compelling him to be circumcised. Thus

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

he wrote:

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: but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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 [Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. (Galatians 2:6-10)

The immediate challenge, imposed by the Judaizers against the truth of the gospel, had been defeated by Paul for the sake of the Gentiles in Asia. Nevertheless one victory rarely wins a war. Paul continued to battle this error in virtually all of his epistles and in all of his ministry for the sake of the churches in that age and for the sake of all who would hear the gospel in subsequent ages. Even so the error of the Judaizers was never fully defeated. Sadly, it will not be defeated until the Lord's final judgment of these things at the *great white throne*.

As Paul continued, he wrote the Galatians that Peter, James, and John perceived the grace that had been given unto him. This grace was at least twofold. First, it had been extended to Paul in his personal salvation; and second, it had been extended to him in his call: when the Lord revealed *his gospel in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles*. Both of these graces were revealed to Ananias and Saul at the time of Saul's salvation:

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil

## Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. (Acts 9:10-16)

This is quite a revelation. Paul knew that he was going to witness before *the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel* at the time of his salvation. This was thirteen years before the door was opened to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, which took place when Peter preached in the house of Cornelius. This was fourteen years before the apostles in Jerusalem extended the right hands of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas, acknowledging that Paul and Barnabas would take the gospel to the Gentiles, while they would continue to minister to the Jews.

Paul did not go to Jerusalem to gain authority for his gospel. He had his authority by *Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead*; and this authority had been extended to Paul in his election and call, before the foundation of the world. Paul's authority was according to the sovereign authority of God. When Paul and Barnabas were given the right hands of fellowship, the apostles were merely acknowledging the sovereign authority of God in saving and calling Paul by His grace. At the point of time when Paul wrote to the Galatians, he was calling upon them to acknowledge the authority of his gospel, because our Lord had said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*.

Paul informed the Galatians that he and Barnabas had departed Jerusalem with Paul's gospel untarnished: the gospel which he had taken (in the years just prior to the writing of his epistle) to Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and the regions that lay round about for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. The Devil had shot his fiery darts at the truth of the gospel in Jerusalem;

### Fourteen Years After Paul's Salvation

during Paul's and Barnabas' ministry in Asia; and in the churches of Galatia, after their departure; but the *whole armor of God and the sword of the Spirit* had provided for the apostles and for the truth of the gospel, which Paul was staunchly defending in his letter to the Galatians: for their sakes and for ours.