

Did Peter and Paul preach the same Gospel?

IS THERE ONLY ONE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE? DID PETER AND PAUL PREACH THE SAME GOSPEL?

Romans 16:25

<sup>25</sup> Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

Romans 2:16 <sup>16</sup> on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

Galatians 2:6-9 <sup>6</sup> But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. <sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised <sup>8</sup> (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), <sup>9</sup> and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Many church members believe there is only one Gospel in the Bible. Are they right in holding to such a conclusion? Is there only one Gospel in the Bible? Did the Apostles Peter and Paul preach the same Gospel or different ones? Setting aside my own opinions, and anyone else's ideas, we will be surprised to learn what God's Word has to say about the matter.

Jesus Christ selected 12 apostles on earth, of whom Peter was the head (they are listed by name in Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13). He commissioned them to go to the nation Israel first—He commanded them not to minister to Gentiles. According to Matthew 10, These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The 12 apostles were to convert all of Israel first, and then, and only then, they were to go to the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Luke 24 further explains:

And [Jesus] said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”

Everything that Israel’s 12 apostles learned, they learned in from Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. Jesus said to them, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). He also said to them, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations” (Luke 22:28). When selecting Judas’ replacement, the apostles said, “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). The 12 apostles (Matthias taking Judas’ apostleship) followed Jesus during His entire earthly ministry, from John the Baptist’s water baptism to Jesus Christ’s ascension into heaven in Acts 1.

Galatians 1:11-18 makes it absolutely clear that the Apostle Paul did not receive from Peter and Israel’s other apostles, the doctrines he taught: “ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ... But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”

Not only did Paul not learn the grace doctrines from Peter and the 11, but he also did not learn the grace doctrines from Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. In fact, Paul wrote: “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Corinthians 5:16). During Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry, Paul was lost, and Paul (known then as “Saul of Tarsus”) was persecuting, imprisoning, and killing Jews who had trusted Jesus as their Messiah (Acts 8:1-4; Acts 26:9-11; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 1:13). The resurrected, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ revealed to Paul alone the “revelation of the mystery” (Romans 16:25; Galatians 1:11-18; Ephesians 3:1-11; Colossians 1:25-26).

Peter, James, and John never used the expression “the revelation of the mystery” in their epistles—only Paul used that term, so that should grab our attention.

Read what the Apostle Peter wrote toward the end of his life in 2 Peter 3:15-16: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

For those who want to discard Paul’s epistles of Romans through Philemon and reject the doctrines of grace, they would also have to throw away the Apostle Peter because Peter identifies Paul’s writings as “Scripture.” If you deny Paul’s apostleship, then you forced to deny Peter’s as well! Furthermore, the Apostle Peter admitted that he did not understand everything that Paul taught and wrote. If Peter and Paul preached the same Gospel and doctrines, then Peter would have no trouble understanding Paul’s teaching. Peter had great difficulty grasping the doctrine Paul taught, so it is only logical to conclude that Paul and Peter preached different messages.

Why did Peter not understand the writings of Paul? Peter could not and did not understand Paul’s message because, like it was stated earlier, Jesus Christ selected Peter as an apostle of the nation Israel (Matthew 10:5-7; Galatians 2:9). On the other hand, Jesus Christ selected Paul to minister to the Gentile, non-Jewish world. Paul was “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 3:1; 2 Timothy 1:11). Peter did not need to understand Paul’s doctrine, because Peter was not ministering to Paul’s audience (Peter had his own doctrine in his own program and had his own audience).

In Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, and 2 Timothy 2:8, Paul wrote about something called “my gospel.” The Bible says that Gospel of the Grace of God was committed to Paul’s trust. Paul spoke in Acts 20:24: “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:11: “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” Notice how this Gospel of Grace was exclusive to Paul’s ministry; nowhere else in Scripture is that Gospel message mentioned. Peter, James, and John are not mentioned in Acts 20:24, Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, 1 Timothy 1:11, or 2 Timothy 2:8. This

“Gospel of the blessed God” could not be the same Gospel that Peter and the eleven preached.

We read in Galatians 2:2, where Paul writes, “I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them [James, Cephas/Peter, and John; verse 9] that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles....” Evidently, Paul shared with James, Peter, and John something they had not previously known—Paul taught them the Gospel that Jesus Christ had committed to his trust (a Gospel message He had not committed to James, Peter, and John). Surely, Paul and Peter preached two different Gospels.

Look at Galatians 2:7-8 KJV: “ 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:).”-- Do you see that there are two Gospels in that verse alone? (The modern English “bibles,” sadly, retranslate the verse to say “the gospel to the circumcision” and “the gospel to the uncircumcision,” making the two gospels seem as though they are one gospel, but such re-translation is dishonest because Peter and the 11 were not just sent to Israel, but were also sent to Gentiles after they converted all of Israel [Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15]).

The Gospel of the Circumcision (the Jews’ “Gospel of the Kingdom;” Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Matthew 9:35), and the Gospel of the Uncircumcision (the Gentiles’ “Gospel of the Grace of God;” Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). You do not find any reference to “the Gospel of the Kingdom” in Paul’s books. Outside of Paul’s ministry, you do not find “the Gospel of the Grace of God.” There are two separate Gospels here: one which God entrusted to Paul’s apostleship and one which God entrusted to Peter and the eleven’s apostleship. There is nothing complicated or contradictory as long as you keep them separate. Peter and the 11 preached that Gentiles would be saved through Israel’s rise to kingdom glory (Isaiah 60:1-3; Zechariah 8:20-23; Acts 3:19-26; et cetera)—the Gospel of the Circumcision. Paul preached that Gentiles would be saved through Israel’s fall (Romans 11:11-15,25)—the Gospel of the Uncircumcision.

According to Romans 16:25-26 and Ephesians 3:5, everything Paul preached—including the Gospel of the Grace of God—was “kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest.” The “but now” of this verse is Paul’s ministry—the revelation of the mystery was kept secret until God revealed it to Paul (which was after Christ’s earthly ministry, and after Jesus had already taught the twelve

apostles of Israel). If Peter was preaching the Gospel of Grace before Paul came on the scene, and many people assume that he was, then both God and His Word are dishonest (and we know God cannot lie; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

Paul is the only person in the Bible who uses the term “the Church the Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; et al.) Peter, James, John, Jesus in His earthly ministry, and all the other apostles of Israel do not use the term “the Church the Body of Christ.” Grab any Bible concordance, and you will not find a single reference to “the Body of Christ” outside of Paul’s epistles, Romans through Philemon. Why? Paul claims that he alone received the revelations and doctrines for this the Dispensation of Grace (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:1-11; Colossians 1:23-27).

The Bible says 1 Corinthians 3:10-11: According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Who laid the foundation of the Christian faith for this the Dispensation of the Grace of God? The Bible says it was the Apostle Paul. Please understand that Jesus Christ is the foundation, but Paul is the “wise masterbuilder” (architect) who laid the foundation Jesus Christ, that is, “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest” (Romans 16:25-26). God revealed that secret information through the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and it was information that involved Jesus Christ as seen through the lens of the grace doctrines (Paul’s epistles, Romans through Philemon).

Read 1 Timothy 1:15-16: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” (Again, sadly, modern English “bibles” tamper with these verses, so their truths are not as obvious here.) A pattern is the first, and the Holy Spirit says that Paul is our pattern. He was the first to get placed into the Church Body of Christ—the “hereafter” refers to people who get saved after Paul. The word “chief” implies Paul is the first, the primary one, and the head of the line (see “chief” in Acts 14:12, Luke 22:26, Acts 28:7 where “chief” means “first, main.”)

Paul’s salvation is our pattern for this dispensation, so the Holy Spirit tells us to follow Paul as he follows Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:16;

Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6). There is no command to follow Peter, James, or John in the Bible. Why? Remember, Paul is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13; Romans 15:16; 2 Timothy 1:11). Remember, James, Peter, and John were apostles of Israel (Matthew 10:5-7; Matthew 19:27,28; Galatians 2:9).

When the nation Israel asked the Apostle Peter, “What must we do to be saved?,” notice Peter’s answer: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 3:19). However, when the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?,” notice what Paul and Silas declared: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). Obviously, these are not the same message. Peter told people to repent and then get water baptized, so they could receive forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit. Yet, Paul simply taught that salvation comes by “believing on [trusting] the Lord Jesus Christ,” without preaching water baptism or repentance. If words mean anything, Peter and Paul preached two separate Gospels.

Confusion abounds when we mix the nation Israel with the Church the Body of Christ. We must “rightly divide” the Bible, separating Law from Grace (Romans 6:14-15), the prophetic program (Acts 3:21) from the mystery program (Romans 16:25-26a), just as the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV). (Another verse that modern English versions pollute.) All of the Bible is for us, but not all the Bible is to us or about us. Paul’s epistles, Romans through Philemon, have direct application to us; the rest of the Bible involves the nation Israel and her prophetic program. We cannot take Israel’s verses as though they were ours.

Anyone who does not see the clear distinction between the ministries and apostleship’s of Paul and Peter is actually unwilling to see the difference. The verses are in plain English, and no seminary degree is necessary. If one disagrees with any of these verses cited above, he or she is denying God’s Word and arguing with God Almighty. Be not foolish, friend. Religious tradition is not the authority; God’s Word rightly divided is the authority. Let the Bible correct your thinking; do not correct the Bible.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 14:37-38). If you do not see the

simple Bible truths contained in this study, you do not want to see them, and you are being dishonest with the Bible and yourself. We conclude that one who ignores these truths is doing so in order to embrace vain church tradition and fallible denominational biases and interpretations.

Without a shadow of a doubt, Peter and Paul did not preach the same Gospel. They had different ministries, they preached to different audiences, and taught different doctrines (hence, right division is necessary). There is only one Gospel today, but there is more than one Gospel in the Bible.