

Short Studies for the Skeptic Series – Part 6

Similarities & Distinctions Between Peter's & Paul's Gospels

In this study we're going to point out the similarities & distinctions between Peter's & Paul's gospels... "But I certify you, brethren, that **the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.** ¹² **For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**" **Gal 1:11-12** "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." **Gal 2:2**

As we turn the pages from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the foremost issue confronted with the nation of Israel was over Who Jesus was proclaimed to be... **Mark 1:1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, **the Son of God;**

In spite of the fact that the devil (Lk 4:3) & unclean spirits (Mk 3:11) recognized Jesus as being the **Son of God**, Jesus was turned over to Pilate for making such claims... **John 19:6-7** When the **chief priests** therefore and **officers** saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him. ⁷ The **Jews answered him**, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself **the Son of God**.

Peter the Apostle of the Circumcision

With focus first being on Peter, we see his response to a question asked of Jesus to His disciples.

Matt 16:13-18 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** ¹⁴ And they said, Some say that thou art **John the Baptist**: some, **Elias**; and others, **Jeremias, or one of the prophets.** ¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, **the Son of the living God.** ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto

thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and **upon this rock I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The very foundation of the church was built upon the premise that Jesus was the **Son of God!** The severity in recognition of such is captured by Jesus' own words... "He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten **Son of God.**" **John 3:18**

Peter's Resurrection Message

On the day of Pentecost, Peter laid out an indictment that argued Jesus, whom Israel crucified, to having been raised to the right hand of God to sit upon the promised prophesied throne of David.

Acts 2:22-24 **Ye men of Israel**, hear these words; **Jesus of Nazareth**, a man approved of God among **you** by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of **you**, as **ye yourselves** also know: ²³ **Him**, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, **ye** have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: ²⁴ **Whom God hath raised up**, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Acts 2:30-36 **Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;** ³¹ **He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ³² **This Jesus hath God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses. ³³ **Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost**, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. ³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, ³⁵ Until I make thy foes thy footstool. ³⁶ **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

The Untoward Generation of Vipers

A timeline marker, often skewed over, is that both John the Baptist & Peter gave same heeded warnings regarding an ***untoward generation of vipers!***

Matt 3:7 But when he (John the Baptist) saw many of the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees** come to **his baptism**, he said unto them, **O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** **Acts 2:40** And with many other words did he (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves from this untoward generation.**

Peter's Gospel

With exceptions to that of receiving the Holy Ghost and baptismal formula, John the Baptist's & Peter's gospels were identical! Both preached the ***baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.***

Acts 2:37-38 Now when **they** heard *this*, **they** were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, **what shall we do?**³⁸ Then Peter said unto **them**, **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.**

A Side Note - Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch

As a side note, after being presented Jesus, the Ethiopian eunuch asked to be baptized. Request was accepted based on the eunuch believing with all his heart that ***Jesus was the Son of God*** ... **Acts 8:35-37** Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ³⁶ And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; **what doth hinder me to be baptized?**³⁷ And Philip said, **If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.** And he answered and said, **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles

Focus now turned on Paul, we see him coming out of the gate preaching in the synagogues that ***Christ is the Son of God*** ... **Acts 9:19-20** And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰ And straightway **he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.**

Paul's Ties of David to the Resurrection

Whereas Peter preached the resurrection of Christ to sit upon the throne of David, Paul ties David & the resurrection, in declaring the ***gospel of God***, as foundation for the gospel & ministry committed to him. Following, are the opening & closing remarks of Paul in his epistle to the Romans:

Paul's Roman's Salutation

Rom 1:1-4 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the **gospel of God**, ² (**Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,**) ³ Concerning **his Son** Jesus Christ our Lord, **which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;** ⁴ And declared to be the **Son of God** with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the **resurrection from the dead:**

Paul's Roman's Closing Remarks

Rom 16:25-26 Now to him that is of power to establish you according to **my gospel**, and the **preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to the **revelation of the mystery**, which **was kept secret since the world began**, ²⁶ But **now** is made manifest, and **by the scriptures of the prophets**, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to **all nations** for the **obedience of faith**:

The prophetic scriptures yielded to God's intent of one day in dealing with ***all nations*** on the bases via '***obedience of faith***'. As shown in a previous study (Part 4), '***of faith***' is held in contrast as to how righteousness was imputed under law... "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;*" **Rom 10:8**

Similarities Between Peter's & Paul Gospels

The **foundation** of each's gospel is identical; **Jesus Christ, the Son of God!** Any notion that the foundation of either's gospel is different is heretical. I believe this is what some imagined when contested that there is more than one gospel?

Acts 4:10-12 Be it known unto you all, and to **all the people of Israel**, that by the **name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him** doth this man stand here before you whole. ¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. ¹² **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

Rom 15:20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named**, lest I should build upon **another man's foundation: 1Cor 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Distinctions Between Peter's & Paul's Ministries

Paul the First as a Pattern to Them who Believe Hereafter

Distinctions between Peter's & Paul's ministries simply lie in revelations brought out via Paul's conversion & ministry, eventually recognized by Peter... **1Tim 1:15-16** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of **whom I am chief.** ¹⁶ 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.** **2Pet 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;* ¹⁶ 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.

Unsearchable Riches of Christ Hid in God Revealed by Paul

Perhaps this is the most profound point to be made in this study series? It was stated in Part 3, that there were two ways in which God hid things in the scriptures. A third way was ‘in God’, being unsearchable in prophecy... **Eph 3:8-9** Unto **me**, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that **I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;**⁹ And to make **all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

In context, these Gentiles, unlike the God-fearing Gentiles encountered in early Acts, are converted uncovenanted heathen to whom Paul was deemed to minister to (Gal 1:16; 2:9; 3:8). The mystery ‘**hid in God**’, being ‘**the unsearchable riches of Christ**’ in prophecy, is that of being foretold that one day the ‘**heathen**’ would have opportunity to become members of the church, the body of Christ! This explains the distinction to be made between Peter’s focus on the **circumcision** and Paul’s on the **uncircumcision/Gentile** ... **Gal 2:7-9** 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.**

This mystery hid in God, the unsearchable riches of Christ, quantifies Paul’s deduction... “**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**” **Eph 2:8-9**

Paul’s Gospel

Paul’s gospel has the same prophetic elements as proclaimed by Peter; Jesus’ death, burial & resurrection... “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel which I preached unto you**, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory **what I preached unto you**, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;** ⁴ And that **he was buried**, and that **he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**” **1Cor 15:1-4** Believing in the resurrected Christ is an essential element for imputed righteousness under Paul’s gospel! **Rom 10:9-10** That if thou shalt confess with thy

mouth the Lord Jesus, and **shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.** ¹⁰ For **with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;** and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Not having been '**sent**' to baptize, 'baptism for the remission of sins' is totally **absent** in Paul's gospel!

Paul's Ways Which Be in Christ

1Cor 4:15-17 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* ¹⁶ **Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.** ¹⁷ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance **of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**

Paul spoke of those who were '**in Christ**' before him... "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were **in Christ before me.**" So, how did things work out between those saved under the kingdom gospel from those under Paul's gospel?

In Acts 15, is recorded a controversy over Gentiles being saved, except for being circumcised after the manner of Moses (Acts 15:1-6), along with exhortation to keep the law. Remember, from last study (Part 5), it was shown that souls that weren't circumcised were cut off from the nation of Israel. Paul & Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to enter into debate with the apostles & elders over this assertion. Understand that Jewish converts, under the kingdom gospel, were expecting the return of Christ. From their viewpoint, it was going to be simply a transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant... **Heb 8:13** In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. **Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.**

Following, are two responses from James clearly indicating two parallel programs existing at the same time during the transitional period of Acts:

Acts 15:19-20 Wherefore my sentence is, **that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:** ²⁰ But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Acts 21:18-22 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto **James; and all the elders were present.** ¹⁹ And when he had saluted them, **he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.** ²⁰ And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, **how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:** ²¹ And they are informed of thee, that **thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.** ²² What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

I disagree with any notion that those Jewish believers were outside the will of God during this stage of transition! The law was still Israel's ***moral compass*** until the establishment of the New Covenant!

Another Side-Note – Rightly Dividing Paul's Epistles

On another side-note, during the Acts transitional period, as God-fearing Gentiles began to be part of the equation, Paul made a huge deal about actions that would offend a brother (Rom 14:5), even to the extent of swearing to '***eat no meat***' (1Cor 8:13). However, when addressing converted uncovenanted Gentiles, his exhortation was explicit... **Col 2:16** Let no man therefore judge you **in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days...** **Col 2:20-22** Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, **why**, as though living in the world, **are ye subject to ordinances,** ²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not; ²² Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

In Part 7, the last study of this series, we'll show how God gave Israel two illustrations, from the Old Testament, what imputed righteousness via believing & without works would look like.