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Paul and Peter's Debate at Antioch As The Reality of the Gospel of Deliverance from Christ: A Theological Review of Galatians 2: 11-21

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Abstract

This research aims to discuss Paul and Peter's debate as the Gospel of Deliverance's reality from Christ. It is studied theologically from Galatians 2: 11-21. The research method is carried out using the library research method to become a new discourse to answer the discussed problems. Paul and Peter's arguments reveal that humans are saved because of faith in Jesus Christ, not because of practising circumcision and the Law. It has been mandated in the Jerusalem council that the gospel is the only thing that guarantees that Gentiles get liberation and freedom, even counting for Abraham's blessing without living by proselytes. The outcome of this debate was news of joy in particular to the Gentiles who became the subject of heated discussion at that time, which led to a deeper understanding of the work of Christ's deliverance.

1. Introduction

The Book of Galatians was written by a defender of liberty who argued that neither Jew nor non-Jew could be freed from sin on his own, that is by maintaining an ethical norm. So the book of Galatians was once called 'Magna Charta of spiritual emancipation' because it stated that 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse so that by faith we receive the Spirit that has been promised (Gal. 3: 13-14). It was decided at the Jerusalem council by mandating the apostles to safeguard the gospel's reality that liberates and liberates all people.

When James' group arrived in Antioch where Peter was eating with the Gentiles, Peter was so scared that he resigned and several people also followed him including Barnabas. Seeing this, Paul said that their behaviour was not following the truth of the gospel. It was the beginning of the debate that took place between Paul and Peter in Antioch.

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Did Paul and Peter's debate in Antioch "*an sich*" become the reality of the gospel of the deliverance of Jesus Christ? Alternatively, the content of the debate is the reality of the gospel of liberation. The debate and the debate's content cannot be separated from each other, but they are not precisely the same. This paper will discuss the content of the debate between Paul and Peter. Generally based on the letters of Paul and Peter and specifically on Galatians 2: 11-21.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Background to the debate

a. Antoch congregation

The Christian community in Syrian Antioch quickly grew into a single metropolitan church. In the number of congregations, they compete with the Jerusalem congregation, although in general the Jerusalem congregation is called the mother church of Christianity, the church in Antioch is specifically called the mother church of pagan Christianity (Bruce, 1983). Antioch was one of the first centres for the spread of the Christian faith besides Jerusalem. At first, the Christians from Greece preached the good news in this city and then followed Barnabas and Paul (Leon-Dufour, 1966). It was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Jesus' followers in Antioch accepted Jewish teachings too but were not circumcised. They do not pay attention to all the rules about eating and drinking. It is due to their direct social contact with the infidels. In the beginning, they were proselytes or God-fearing people. In the case of this proselyte, Paul accused the Jews of "trying to convince people to worship God in a way that is contrary to the Law" (Acts 18:13). In other words, Paul was accused of being a proselyte (Jacobs, 1990). In Antioch, there also arose conflict between Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin over meat offered to idols (Acts 15: 22-30) and Peter's attitude (Cephas) towards Gentile Christians.

b. Decree of the Apostles in Jerusalem

To solve theological problems faced by Christian congregations, the apostles met in Jerusalem. Biblical scholars suspect that the meeting took place in 48 or 49 (Groenen, 1989). Paul went to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus (Gal. 2: 1). According to F.F Bruce (1982), Paul did not mention meeting the Jerusalem church leaders, but Paul and Barnabas had separate conversations with those who were respected (Gal. 2: 2) (Bruce, 1982).

Those who are respected are James, the brother of Jesus, Peter and John and not in the capacity as leaders of the Jerusalem church, even though Paul recognizes them as respected. However, Paul also said: "What their former position is is not important to me, because God does not look at the face. Nevertheless those who are respected do not impose anything else on me" (Gal. 2: 6b). Something else is meant here, of course, religious regulations to be carried out.

Then James, Peter and John who were apostles to the circumcised people, shook hands with Paul and Barnabas who were apostles to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2: 8-9). This event became significant because they accepted, confirmed and acknowledged their apostolic debate. These apostolic differences will, of course, affect their different evangelistic methods.

According to Jacobs (1990), the "decree of the apostles" meant that former Greek Christians (non-Jews) should "abstain" from (a) Idols Food, (b) Having defiled and fornication, (c) Animal meat that is suffocated, and (d) Blood (Acts 15:20) (Jacobs, 1990). The problem at the meeting of Paul and Peter in the Antioch congregation was related to "eating together" (Jacobs, 1990), which had not yet

been decided in the decree. Paul himself seemed ignorant of the edict, so he violently blamed Peter at Antioch (Jacobs, 1990).

2.2. Contents of the Debate of Paul and Peter

a. Paul's Attitude Toward Peter

Paul recognized Peter as the leader of the early church of Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18) and recognized Peter as a man of honour (Gal. 2: 2). Paul uses the names Peter and Cephas interchangeably in Galatians. However, Paul attacked Peter's attitude in Antioch. When James's circle had not arrived in Antioch Peter agreed to eat with the uncircumcised Christians, but after they came, Peter withdrew and turned away from them for "fear" of the circumcised brothers (Gal. 2:12).

According to Paul, Peter's attitude is not following the gospel's truth (Gal. 2:14). So the problems are (1) Peter's doubtful attitude (Gal. 2:12, mentions Peter φοβουμενος "fear"); (2) Uncertain decisions about the social relations of the circumcised (Jewish Christian) and the uncircumcised (Greek / Gentile Christian), especially in the matter of eating together which for Jews has a significant meaning. For Paul, a decree regulating the relationship between circumcised Christians and uncircumcised Christians was not so important because of the gospel of Christ since there is no difference between Jews and Greeks, this one God is the Lord of all people (Romans 10:12).

b. Peter's Doubt

The meaning of Peter's name is 'stone' which is the masculine form of πετρα (*wadas*) which fits Peter's nickname Cephas (Leon-Dufour, 1966). Jesus gave this name to stand like a rock (Matt. 16:18). This name has a symbolic meaning and a historical meaning. However, Peter still doubted the apostle's decision in Jerusalem and had doubts about the gospel's deliverance truth. Paul says that Peter made a mistake when he came to Antioch (Gal. 13:11). Peter was still thinking yes and no about Judaism and Christianity, about the Law and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Barnabas and other Jewish Christians were also drawn to their hypocrisy in the presence of James's circle (Gal. 2:13). Peter said to Peter twice:

1) "if you, a Jew lives an infidel, and not a Jew" and

2) "how can you force the uncircumcised brothers to live a Jewish life?" (Gal. 2: 4b).

The first part shows that Peter, as a Jew had practised a pagan way of life, so he would no longer force the uncircumcised brothers to live a Jewish life because Peter had practised the pagan way of life in Antioch.

Guthrie (1984) stated that Peter probably thought compromise (eating together) would be the best solution for Jews and Gentiles. Nevertheless, Paul saw no solution to this problem (Guthrie, 1984). Peter, who originally had Christian solidarity by eating a meal with uncircumcised meals, showed that Peter and non-Jewish Christians were equal in God's eyes (Bruce, 1982). The exclusive attitude of the Jews, which is reflected in the daily life of a meal, has been erased. All nations are God's choice. This attitude was taken by Peter voluntarily until news came that a messenger from James's circle had arrived. He probably did this in his position as leader of the Jerusalem church who visited the Antioch church. At least Peter wanted to understand the way his people lived in Antioch. Jesus had instructed Peter: "Feed my sheep" (John 21: 15-17).

However, Paul saw that Peter was not consistent with his solidarity with non-Jewish Christians, so he strongly criticized Peter for being depressed and influenced by the James group's teachings

(Gal. 2:14). Peter's attitude seems to want to restore the exclusive attitude of the Jews who do not want to eat food with non-Jews. Paul is angry and emphatically rejects exclusivity.

Paul rejects the Law's imposition on humans. It shows his understanding that human justification in God does not depend on much or at least obeying the Law; man is justified by grace alone. Humans cannot work out this gift by themselves but must receive it from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, everything related to the Law is useless and irrelevant. For Paul, only one fact applies, namely, the only possible gift through absolute surrender to God (Barclay, 1958).

As has been said above, Paul attacked Peter's way of life in Antioch, not Peter's theology. For Peter himself the way of life inherited from his ancestors was futile because the man was redeemed with expensive blood, namely by the blood of Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 1: 18-19).

The book of Peter was written in the year 64 or 66 (Duyvermann, 1992). The Letter of I Peter can be used to excuse that Peter did not doubt his theology, especially about his understanding of ancestors' futile heritage. In the Greek text "vain" from the word φθαρτοις means "mortal", or can die, can be rotten (Newman, 1991). It is similar to Paul's theology which says: "But what was profit κέρδος for me, now I count loss (ζημία-ζημίαν) because of Christ (Phil. 3: 7). Even, in Gal. 3: 8, Paul calls it "garbage" mentioned σκύβαλα, which means "faeces", "garbage" (Newman, 1991).

So the differences between Paul and Peter theology regarding Christ's work of salvation and the futile Law were no different, and this was not the content of their debate in Antioch. The debate that occurred was about Peter's way of life, which was not strict about eating even one food. Peter still hesitated until he was led twice by the Divine Spirit to assert that food which he considered unclean was permitted to be eaten (Acts 10:14; 11: 2).

c. The Differences between Paul's Apostles and Peter's Apostles

Paul's apostolate was for the uncircumcised, i.e. the Gentiles, while Peter's apostle was for the circumcised. Gal. 1: 16b: "I made him known among the Gentiles" (ἔθνεσιν); Gal. 2: 2b: "the gospel which I preached among the Gentiles" (ἔθνεσιν); Gal. 2: 7-8a: "I have been entrusted with the preaching of the gospel to the uncircumcised (ἀκροβυστίας) as well as Peter for the circumcised (περιτομῆς) because he gave Peter the strength to be an apostle to the circumcised people. (περιτομῆς)".

According to Bruce, Peter's Gospel to the Jews has a different emphasis and specific colours than the Gospel of Paul to the Gentiles (Bruce, 1982). Nevertheless, this difference was not seen by Paul as can be seen in I Corinthians 15:11, "Therefore both I and they, thus we taught, and thus ye believed" can also be compared with Galatians 1: 6-9.

In I Corinthians 1:12, it is seen phenomena of Paul class, the Apollos class, the Cephas class and the Christ class. In Paul's answer, the idea implied that their gospel was not divided, namely that the gospel that Cephas preached was the same as the gospel preached by Paul, namely the gospel of Jesus Christ. Was the division between the Pauline class, the Apollos class, the Cephas class, and the Christ class the result of Antioch's debates? 1 Corinthians was written 54/55 from Ephesus (I Cor. 16: 8) (Kummel, 1966). It means that after the trial in Jerusalem (Leon-Dufour, 1966). Just as Antioch's debate took place after the Apostles' trial in Jerusalem (Bavinck, 2000), at that time, it was confident that Peter's followers and Paul's followers were already there.

3. Results and Discussions

a. Paul's contribution to the "νῦν" (present)

Each of Paul's interpretations of the gospel and the Law he was confronted with appearances (ἐώρακα) on the Damascus road (Acts 9). Paul prefers to use revelation rather than interpretation because for Paul, the gospel was revealed to him only the result of interpretation (Bruce, 1982). The events in Damascus were of central importance to Paul's theological experience. This incident became the centre of differences in understanding the past (ποτε) and now (νῦν). After the conversion in Damascus, the Law's meaning changed for Paul (Situmorang, 1980). What was previously (ποτε) an advantage for Paul, now (νῦν) considered a loss for Christ (cf. Phil. 3: 7) what matters to Paul is the present, the age of grace (cf. Gal. 2:21).

For Paul, repentance is an absolute condition if a person is to live sustainably in the redeemed people's fellowship. However, the need for repentance is not the basis of salvation (Guthrie, 1992) as the Law is not abrogated (cf. Rom. 3:13). Repentance by faith in Christ means cancelling the power of sin through the Law (Rom. 7: 1-6), declaring sin to be a thing of the past (Rom. 6:14); justification occurs without the Law (Rom. 3:21) but only by faith (Rom. 3:28) (Situmorang, 1980). Through Galatians, Paul also delivered a significant message to the Christians of Jewish descent present at the debate.

Paul identified himself as a Jew (Gal. 2:15). They all know that no one is justified by observing the Law, but by righteousness because of faith in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal. 2:16), which is the truth that God gives based on belief (Phil. 3: 9). In Rom. 3:24, Paul says that justification is simply a gift of God. Paul says this is related to God's deeds in Christ, which come spontaneously from God. The purpose is that man may be saved (Buttrick, 1962). It is the Gospel of the Deliverance of Christ.

In Galatians 2:20, Paul acknowledges he is alive, but it is no longer I who live alone, but Christ who lives in me. It is evidence of his fellowship with Christ, for Christ spoke to him, spoke in him and through him (II Cor. 13: 3). In Deismann's sentence, it is mentioned: "Christ in Paul" (Gal. 2:20) and "Paul in Christ" (Deisman, 1957). Paul in Christ can happen because God is Spirit so He can live in Paul and Paul lives in Him. Galatians 2:20 explains that living with Christ is a dynamic life, a life that is justified and freed from the power of sin: "For Christ has made us free" (Gal. 5: 1). It also frees man from the Law of sin, from death and the Law. Living in the Law is living in legalism. Cancellation of legalism (Situmorang, 1980) is the primary condition for Christian freedom of action.

4. Conclusion

Paul's and Peter's debates are contained in Galatians. One of the congregations messed up (cf. 1: 7; 4: 7,12) (Groenen, 1989). The early Christians struggled to take a stand against the Law (including circumcision and Jewish customs). Are all of these valid and still required? There were Christians from among the Pharisees (cf. Acts 15:15) who believed in Jesus as the Messiah but believed that the Law and letters were still obligatory for all Christians, which was absolute prerequisite salvation. So, non-Jewish who convert to Christianity are obliged to circumcise and observe the Law.

On the other hand, several other Christians have argued that the Law and circumcision are not conditions for salvation. The debate is placed in Galatians. A letter which clearly states Christian freedom (Gal. 5: 1ff). The letter is intended to answer the Galatians' doubts about the Law and circumcision, mainly through the placement of Paul and Peter's debate (Gal. 2: 11-21) about circumcision. For Paul, the gospel's essence is this: God, through Jesus, who was crucified, now frees and saves all humankind by faith alone. Circumcision and Law are not prerequisites for obtaining salvation. For Paul it was essential and fundamental so that he did not want to hear about the

bargain of "pastoral wisdom," and did not hesitate to rebuke Peter (Gal. 2:14) publicly and cut ties with Barnabas' old friend (Gal. 2:13) (Groenen, 1989).

Through Antioch's debate, Paul's theology about the Law became more evident, that human is not justified by keeping the Law (Gal. 2:16). With the gospel of Christ, man is freed from the bondage of the Law. The gospel of Christ is the gospel that frees the power of the legalism of Law. The debate itself can become a reality of the gospel of the deliverance of Jesus Christ. Because through this debate, there were talks that led to a deeper understanding of the work of Christ's deliverance.

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