

Chapter 2

v. 1-2

Return to Jerusalem

- Paul returns to Jerusalem after 14 years and this time he brings Barnabas and Titus with him.
- We see in this that Paul was not dependent or beholden to the other apostles. He was ordained by Christ and that was the only authority that was required.
- The reason he returned to Jerusalem was because he had received a revelation from God telling him to go back.
- He takes the Gospel of Jesus to the people of Jerusalem.
- He isn't going there to make trouble as we can tell in v. 2 because he went to talk to people privately and not in large crowds. He wasn't sent to upend everything rather to share the Gospel with the Gentiles of Jerusalem.
- Paul's ministry is legitimized here.

v. 3-5

Circumcision- (Genesis 17:10-14)

- One of Paul's associates, Titus, was a Greek and therefore he was not circumcised.
- Most of the world still to this day does not practice circumcision. The United States is one of the most strict adherents to the practice but most men in the world were not and are not circumcised.
- There was a group of people, called the Judaizers, within the church in Jerusalem that still adhered to the old law regarding circumcision. They wanted Paul to force Titus to be circumcised. Paul and company refused on grounds that the new covenant set them free from the old laws therefore preserving their freedom under the Gospel.
- This is a prime example of *legalism*.
- Legalism means by doing good works or by obeying the law, a person earns and merits salvation. This adds to the Gospel that says we are saved by grace through faith in Christ.
- Anything added to that makes it a false gospel.

- Paul was guarding the sanctity of the true Gospel by refusing to circumcise Titus.
- The ones who wanted this to happen, Paul calls them “false brothers”.

v. 6-10

Paul is accepted

- The influential people Paul is talking about seem to be Peter, James, and John.
- They added nothing to his ministry but when they saw his Gospel work to the Gentiles they approved of him and gave him the right hand of fellowship.
- They agreed that he should minister to the uncircumcised while they ministered to the circumcised. (Gentile vs Jew)
- This took from 14-17 years to accomplish.

Small Group Questions

- 1) While Paul was ministering in Arabia did any of the other apostles have anything to do with his ministry? Why is that important?
 - They did not. For the first 3 years Paul hadn't even seen any of the existing apostles. He was ministering based off of the revelations that he was receiving from Christ Himself. This is big because it shows that Paul was indeed an apostle chosen by Christ. He did not need the approval of the influential apostles and his ministry would be to a different people group entirely.
- 2) What was the group of people called that wanted Paul to circumcise Titus?
 - Judaizers
- 3) What is it called when something is added to the Gospel as a prerequisite to salvation?

- Legalism. The Judaizers were guilty of legalism because they believed that the old ceremonial law must still be adhered to in order to be saved. That includes the dietary restrictions but in this specific case it was circumcision.
- 4) What book do we first find the concept of circumcision and what was its significance?
- Genesis. It was the marker by which God's covenant people would be identified. It was an act of obedience on the part of the parents to circumcise their 8 day old son as well as an act of obedience for any adult males who converted to Judaism. It was required to be a part of God's covenant people under the O.T. law.
- 5) What are modern forms of legalism?
- Let them give answers but things like Bible translation, music style, dress code, etc are all extra-Biblical requirements that some Christians place on salvation.