

I. Introduction: How can a person be justified before God?

II. Paul visits Jerusalem for the sake of unity in the gospel. v. 1-2

A. When did Paul go to Jerusalem? v. 1

1. Fourteen years after his conversion or fourteen years since his last visit ? 1:18
2. Is this meeting the same as the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15?
3. This probably refers to the Jerusalem visit recorded in Acts 11:27-30 (45 AD?).

B. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? v. 2

1. He received a revelation from God. 1:12 Acts 11:28
2. His gospel and his mission were to be ratified by the Jerusalem Apostles.
3. Why does Paul refer to Peter, James and John as “those who were of reputation” and “pillars”? v. 2b,6,9 6:3
4. Was Paul having doubts after all of these years? v. 2c 1:11-12 4:11 5:7 1 Th. 3:5

C. Whom did Paul bring with him and why? v. 1b

1. Barnabas is Paul’s co-laborer among the Gentiles. 2:13 Acts 4:36-37 9:27 11:25-26 13:1-14:28
2. Titus is a product of Paul’s Gentile mission – and a crucial test case. 2 Co. 2:13 7:6 8:6 Titus 1-3
3. How will the Jerusalem Apostles react?

III. Circumcision (and all other law-keeping) is not necessary for salvation. v. 3-5

A. Titus, the Gentile, was not compelled to receive circumcision. v. 3

1. The fact that the Jerusalem Apostles received Titus as a brother (justified by faith alone) settles the matter of whether circumcision is required for salvation.
2. The same conclusion was later declared at the Jerusalem Council. Acts 15:8-11

B. False brethren infiltrated the churches seeking to bring the Gentiles into bondage under the law. v. 4 1:6-7 Acts 15:1,5 20:28-31 2 Co. 11:13,26 Jude 1:4 2 Pe. 2:1ff

1. Seeking justification by law-keeping results in slavery. 5:1-3 Acts 15:10 Ro. 8:15
2. The gospel sets you free from bondage to the law. 4:3,7,21-31 5:1a John 8:32 Acts 15:11 13:38-39 Heb. 2:14f Rom. 5:19

C. Paul did not yield to the Judaizers to any degree. v. 5a

1. Some might have said that Paul should compromise on circumcision, since it was such a small matter, in order to keep the peace.
2. Paul was very accommodating on matters which didn’t put the gospel at risk. 1 Co. 9:19-23 Phil. 1:15-17 Rom. 14-15
3. But to add anything we do to the work of Christ is to nullify the gospel. 5:2-4
4. Why does Paul later circumcise Timothy after he had refused to circumcise Titus? 6:15 5:6 Acts 16:3 15:1 21:23ff 1 Co. 9:19-23 7:19
5. The gospel is THE truth. There is no other way to be right with God except by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Jo. 14:6
6. Paul was a “freedom fighter” for the sake of the Galatians. v. 5b

IV. How does Paul's fight for the gospel apply to us today?

- A. We must be absolutely clear about the gospel message. 2:16
 - 1. To add any requirement for justification beyond faith alone in Christ alone which is by God's grace alone undermines the gospel. 2:21
 - 2. We must be very careful in choosing our leaders and missionaries. Titus 1:9
- B. False teachers continue to sneak into the churches and to corrupt the gospel through addition or subtraction.
 - 1. They will try to worm their way in.
 - 2. Some important differences may, at first, seem to be minor.
 - 3. Much of the established "church" through the ages has defiled the gospel.
- C. There can be no compromise with those who corrupt the gospel. v. 5 2 Co. 11:19-20 Acts 4:12
- D. We, like Paul, must be "freedom fighters" who both preach the gospel and defend it against false so-called brothers. Acts 20:28-31 Rom. 16:17
- E. Freedom from the law does not mean that obedience to God is unimportant. v. 10 5:13ff Jo. 14:15 1 Jo. 2:3-4 Eph. 2:10 Js. 1:25 2:12 1 Pe. 2:16-17

V. Conclusion.

- A. The truth of the gospel is unchanging.
- B. The gospel is liberating.
- C. The gospel is worth fighting for.
- D. The gospel makes a great promise.

Discussion questions

1. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem?
Did he need the approval of the other Apostles?
2. Of what was Paul afraid?
3. Why did he bring Titus?
4. Why is it significant that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised while in Jerusalem?
5. Why was Paul unwilling to compromise with the false brethren?
6. Why does Paul yield in other circumstances (including the circumcision of Titus)?
7. In what way do false teachers today add to the gospel, thereby destroying it?
8. How should we handle threats to the purity of the gospel?
9. How should we regard those who attend churches whose teaching denies the gospel?
10. When should we yield?

*Free at last, free at last
I thank God I'm free at last
Free at last, free at last
I thank God I'm free at last*

*Some of these mornings, bright and fair
I thank God I'm free at last
Goin' meet King Jesus in the air
I thank God I'm free at last*