

I. Background: Jews, Gentiles, Exile, and Occupation

- A. (early Old Testament, 1500-700 BC) Israel: God's chosen people
- B. (later Old Testament, 700-400 BC) the Jews in exile (2 Chronicles 36:11-21; Ezra 9-10)
- C. (between the Testaments, 450 BC – AD 50) Judea under occupation

II. Galatians 1-2: should Jewish Christians stop eating with Gentile Christians?

- A. Paul believes that a great deal rides on this question.
- B. He pins the question of *how we are justified* on it.
- C. Antioch: the most important major city near Judea, with a huge Jewish population
- D. James and Peter think that they are right in not eating with Gentile Christians

III. Acts 15: do Gentile Christians have to act like Jews in order to follow Christ?

- A. Separate question, separate time.
 - Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, AD 37 (Galatians 1:18-20)
 - Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, AD 48 (Acts 11:27-30; Galatians 2:1-10)
 - Embassy from James, later AD 48 (Galatians 2:11-14)
 - "Judaizing" group goes to Asia Minor, Paul writes Galatians, early AD 49
 - Jerusalem council, later AD 49
- B. The rules are minimal. (see Genesis 8:20-9:17)
- C. "Natural law" or "moral law." Specific application varies from culture to culture.

IV. Romans 14: Do Jews have to act like Gentiles to follow Christ?

- A. Background ...
- B. Eating together: should I serve my Jewish Christian friend bacon?
- C. No: don't judge your brother for keeping with his culture, and don't force him to break the rules he is used to (if you can help it).

V. From one culture to another – What lessons can we take from the Jewish/Gentile question?

- A. The gospel creates tremendous freedom for all who believe in it (Galatians 5:1; Luke 10:27-28; James 1:25; 2:8)
- B. Sometimes love will lead us to conform to cultural expectations, sometimes to ignore them (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Acts 17:21-26; Galatians 5:2)
- C. Every church, Jewish and Gentile, should cherish the inheritance of God's word. (Titus 1:12-13; John 4:22; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 4:26)
- D. Every church, Jewish or Gentile, should remove unnecessary obstacles to others understanding the gospel (1 Corinthians 14:21-25)
- E. Every church should be careful not to pass judgment on aspects of church life that are not clearly biblically important.
- F. How to express the unity of the gospel across cultures: sharing a table together (Acts 2:42; 4:32-37; Ephesians 4:28; Acts 6; Galatians 6:10; Acts 11:27-30 with Galatians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8-9)