

be pillars" (v. 9). None of these expressions were meant to be insulting. Paul understood that the brethren in Jerusalem looked up to these men and relied on their judgment. If the controversy over Jewish legalism was to be resolved, it would be resolved by the leadership of the church. Therefore, Paul wisely began with them in private.

When all was said and done, "not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (v. 3). Had the Judaizers been correct, the apostles would have insisted that Titus be circumcised. They did not do so, which proved beyond the slightest doubt that the Judaizers were absolutely wrong! This case set a precedent for all Gentile Christians everywhere to be fully accepted without circumcision or any other aspect of Jewish legalism.

In 2:4, Paul clarified the reason for this visit to Jerusalem: "because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage)." Paul uses the expression "false brethren" again in 2 Corinthians 11:26 in reference to the same type of people. Luke identifies them as "some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed" (Acts 15:5). They were brethren in Christ, but they had become false brethren by denying that Christ was sufficient to save them; now they were teaching that circumcision and Mosaic Law-keeping were also necessary. Additionally, their motives were corrupt. Typical of false teachers (compare 1 Peter 2:1), they had sneaked into the church without announcing their true intentions: to spy out the liberty of the Christians (especially Gentile Christians) and bring them into bondage. Obligating them to observe the Mosaic Law would put them into bondage (see Acts 15:10 where Peter likened the Law to a yoke, and Galatians 5:1 where Paul calls it a "yoke of bondage").

By trusting in Jesus and obeying His gospel, these believing Pharisees had demonstrated that they could not be saved by Mosaic Law-keeping. Yet now they were attempting to bind the Law upon the Gentile converts, telling them they could not be saved without it! Such inconsistency ought to have been obvious, but the Judaizers could not (or would not) see it!

When the false teachers had infiltrated the church at Antioch with their legalism, Paul and Barnabas "did not yield submission even for an hour" to them (5:5). Luke records that they "had no small dissension and dispute" with the Judaizers (Acts 15:2). Why? Why make such an issue of it? Did it really matter? Paul made it clear that they opposed the legalists "that the truth of the

gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 5:5). To compromise with the Judaizers would have been to endorse a perverted gospel. Paul would have none of that! Either Jesus is sufficient as Savior, or He isn't. If He isn't, then the gospel is meaningless. If He is, then the Law of Moses is no longer in force and must not be bound as it if it is.

Not only did the Jerusalem apostles not compel Titus to be circumcised, they "added nothing" to Paul (2:6). That is, they did not alter or adjust Paul's gospel in any way, nor did they confer any authority upon him. Remember, Paul had been made an apostle by the Lord, and he had received his gospel from the Lord, just like the other apostles. The Judaizers were, once again, in error when they claimed that Paul was dependent upon the Jerusalem apostles for his authority and his message. Paul was not superior to them, but he was their equal in every way.

Rather than conferring anything upon Paul, the other apostles and the elders "saw" (recognized) the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship (2:7). There were not two gospels - one for the uncircumcised and another for the circumcised. Rather, the one gospel was preached in two realms: predominantly Jewish areas (e.g. Jerusalem and Judea) and mostly Gentile areas (such as those Paul visited on his missionary journeys). Though Peter worked mostly among Jews, he still preached to Gentiles (see Acts 10, Peter made the first Gentile converts). And, though Paul worked mostly among Gentiles, his custom as he went from city to city, was still to evangelize in the Jewish synagogue first (Acts 17:2) before preaching to the Gentiles.

What made them certain of the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship? They "perceived the grace that had been given to me" (Galatians 2:9). This refers to miraculous works that God did through Paul, just as He did through Peter and the other apostles (v. 8). Paul and Barnabas had related these things as they told of their evangelism among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12). As a result, the leadership in the Jerusalem church "gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2:9). Fellowship is joint participation or sharing. By clasping right hands, they acknowledged that they were jointly participating in the same work for the same Lord. Far from rejecting Paul, they accepted him totally.

The Jerusalem apostles requested only that Paul "remember the poor" (2:10). This would refer particularly to the poor there in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas had already brought one contribution (Acts 11:27-30), and Paul was at that very time putting together another collection (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Truly, this was something Paul was "eager to do" (Galatians 2:10).

Review Questions (Lesson #5)

**Answer T for true, F for false**

1. Paul needed the Jerusalem apostles to tell him if his gospel was the right one.
2. Titus, a Greek Christian, accompanied Paul & Barnabas to serve as a test case.
3. The miracles God worked through Paul were the same as those He worked through the other apostles.

4. Paul should have gone ahead and circumcised Titus to keep peace in the church.  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. The gospel for the Jews included circumcision, but the gospel for the Gentiles didn't.

**Give short answers:**

1. Into what "bondage" were the false teachers trying to bring the Christians? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What one thing did the Jerusalem apostles ask Paul to be sure to do? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who were "those of reputation"? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If the Judaizers had been correct, what would the apostles have insisted regarding Titus? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Paul & Barnabas react when the Judaizers came to Antioch and began spreading their false doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

**Fill in the blanks:**

1. Paul also referred to "those of reputation" as "those who \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ and "those who \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_."
2. The Judaizers falsely taught the Christians that "unless you are \_\_\_\_\_ according to the custom of \_\_\_\_\_, you cannot be \_\_\_\_\_."
3. Typical of false teachers, the Judaizers had \_\_\_\_\_ without announcing their true \_\_\_\_\_ : to \_\_\_\_\_ out the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christians (especially \_\_\_\_\_ Christians) and bring them into \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Jerusalem apostles added nothing to Paul. That is, they did not \_\_\_\_\_ or Paul's \_\_\_\_\_ in any way, nor did they \_\_\_\_\_ any \_\_\_\_\_ upon him.
5. By clasping \_\_\_\_\_, they acknowledged that they were \_\_\_\_\_ in the same \_\_\_\_\_ for the same \_\_\_\_\_.

*Galatians: Guarding the Gospel of Grace*

Lesson #5 Continued Defense of Paul's Apostleship (Galatians 2:1-10)

In his letter to the churches of Galatia, Paul was compelled to defend himself and his gospel against false teachers who claimed he was, at best, a Johnny-come-lately mini-apostle with a hand-me-down gospel. By proving that he was a genuine apostle appointed by Christ, Paul safeguarded the gospel against the Judaizers who sought to corrupt it with their Jewish legalism (requiring Gentile converts to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses).

Fourteen years after his conversion, Paul "went up again to Jerusalem" (2:1). He says "again" because eleven years earlier he had spent fifteen days there (see 1:18). Acts 15 gives the details of the later visit. There, Paul and Barnabas were working with the church in Antioch when false teachers from Judea came "and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (Acts 15:1). The Antioch church sent Paul, Barnabas, and some others to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question. One of the "others" was Titus, a Greek Christian who served as a test case. If Titus had to be circumcised, then so would all other Gentile Christian men; if not, then no others would either.

Although the church at Antioch sent them, Paul said he went up "by revelation" (Galatians 2:2). Just how the Holy Spirit revealed to Paul that he was to go is not specified. In a similar case, the Holy Spirit instructed Peter to go to Cornelius' house (Acts 10), yet the messengers from Cornelius also asked Peter to come (vv. 20, 22). In both cases, there is no conflict between people asking them to go and God letting them know it is His will that they go.

Upon arrival in Jerusalem, Paul "communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2:2). Who knows what lies the false teachers had told the apostles about Paul! Therefore he laid out clearly what he taught. Paul knew what he taught was right. He sought not to erase doubts in his own mind, but to assure the apostles and elders that he taught the truth. Any misunderstanding could have discredited him and thereby undermined his work.

"Those who were of reputation" would likely include the apostles and the Jerusalem elders, especially James, the Lord's brother. Paul also refers to them as "those who seemed to be something" (v. 6), and those "who seemed to