

Paul's letter to the Galatians



Paul's Second Jerusalem Visit

Galatians 2:1-10

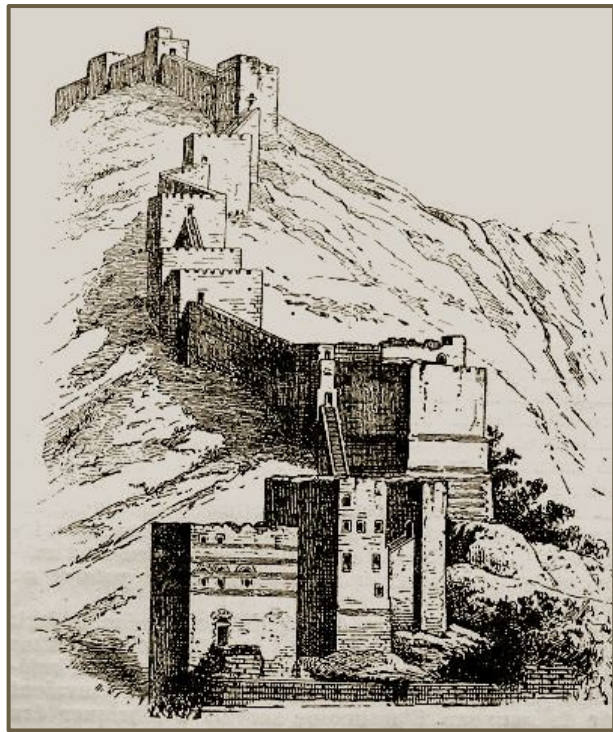


Steve Lewis

www.SpiritAndTruth.org

History of Paul's early ministry

- around Damascus (~3 years)
- in Syria and Cilicia (~10 years)
- in Antioch of Syria (~1 year)
- prophecy of the coming famine
- collecting famine relief funds in Antioch
- Paul, Barnabas, and Titus carry relief funds to Jerusalem; this will be Paul's second short visit with the apostles since his original departure from the city.



Ramparts of Antioch in Syria

The purpose for Paul's visit to Jerusalem (2:1-2)

- Paul's traveling companions: **Barnabas** and **Titus**
- **"because of a revelation"** concerning the severe famine; carrying relief funds to the leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30).
- **"submitted to them the gospel which I preach"** ~ in private only to the leaders; placing the issue before them to get their consensus.
- Should obedience to the Mosaic Law be added to the gospel of God's grace for salvation? Even Peter experienced such opposition after reporting the salvation of Cornelius' household (Acts 11:1-18).
- Paul was hoping to nip this issue in the bud.

Titus and Gentile circumcision (2:3-4)

- Titus was a Spirit-filled believer trusting in Christ for his salvation, as well as a devoted servant of the Lord with a proven record of ministry with Paul and Barnabas.
- **“false brethren secretly brought in”** were insisting that Gentile believers be circumcised and submit to the Mosaic Law. Their intention was **“to bring us into bondage”** under the authority of the Jewish religious authorities and practices. Not all who profess to be Christians are actually fellow members of the family of God.
- But Titus was **not** compelled to be circumcised.



The truth of the gospel was at stake (2:5)

- **“we did not yield in subjection to them”** ~ they did not give in for the sake of peace and harmony.
- This was a matter of principle concerning **“the truth of the gospel.”**
- Salvation can be received only as a gift of God’s grace to those who put their trust in what Christ did to save them, and nothing can be added to the simple requirement of faith for salvation (e.g., circumcision or obedience to any set of legalistic rules).
- The way the case of Titus was handled in Jerusalem would be a powerful rebuttal to the claims of the Galatian Judaizers.

A private meeting with those of repute (2:6)

- **“those of high reputation”** ~ Paul’s way of identifying Peter, James, and John. They had been companions of Jesus in the past, and the Judaizers probably claimed that Paul’s apostleship was inferior because he had not been among them.
- But reputation purely by past association makes no difference because **“God shows no partiality.”**
- **“those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me”** ~ the apostles saw that nothing further need be added to what Paul was already proclaiming. They were in agreement and found it to be complete and correct in every detail.

Their recognition of Paul's commission (2:7-8)

- “**on the contrary**” ~ instead of finding Paul's gospel inadequate, the apostles clearly recognized that God had “**entrusted**” him with the true gospel and a mission to the uncircumcised.
- Paul's apostleship came from God Himself, and the Jerusalem leaders acknowledged that fact. Paul was fulfilling a crucial role in Jesus' commission to “make disciples of *all the nations*” (Matt 28:19).
- God *commissioned* Paul, but He also “**empowered**” him (*energeō*). God operated equally through both Peter and Paul, so one was not inferior to the other. Both spheres of ministry were of equal value.

The outcome of the meeting (2:9-10)

- The Jerusalem leaders recognized God's "**grace**" in Paul's life ~ God does something for you which you cannot do for yourself. A related keyword: "**given**" (*didōmi*) ~ to bestow a gift, in this case without cost to the undeserving recipient who places faith in Christ.
- "**James and Cephas and John**" were "**reputed to be pillars**" ~ they "**gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship**" ~ a tangible way of expressing complete agreement and full support for their ministry. This included their understanding that circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law were not required for Titus and the other Gentile converts.
- "**please keep on remembering the poor**" ~ exactly what Paul did.

Summary

- Paul's second visit to Jerusalem took place fourteen years after he originally left that city. During those years Paul had a productive gospel ministry among the Gentiles.
- Titus was a perfect example of why circumcision and submission to the Mosaic Law were not required in order to receive salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ.
- Paul met privately with the apostles to gain their agreement on the essential gospel message ~ **"the truth of the gospel"** was at stake, and nothing must be added to the simple requirement of faith for salvation.