

Galatians

Week 3 – Chapter 2



Chapter 2:

VI-3:

Paul goes to Jerusalem to meet with the leadership to determine if his preaching is going in the same direction as Jerusalem.

Titus is introduced and Paul comments that he did not need to be circumcised. Why circumcision?

It was all a question of identity, of knowing not only who you were yourself but who else belonged in your group, your tribe, your ethnic family¹

For Paul there are 3 reasons for going to Jerusalem;

- He went because God told him to, not to learn the gospel
- To maintain his unity with the leaders
- For the ‘truth of the gospel’

V4:

Paul uses the idea of freedom and slavery to discuss what the false teachers were requiring. It is a metaphor he will come back to often. It harks back to the most important event in the history of Israel, the Exodus.

Col. 3:11 There are no ethnic divisions.

Gen. 15:13 Slaves

V9:

Paul uses the word **κοινωνία**, meaning to hold in common. It is the word we use for fellowship. Paul uses it with the idea of fellowship, partnership, sharing in the life of the Messiah and in the power of Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 1:9

2 Cor. 13:14

V6-10:

The outcomes of the meeting were;

1. The leaders could not add anything to Paul’s preaching
2. They recognized the need for Paul to preach to the Gentiles while they preached to the Jews
3. They did not require Titus to be circumcised.

¹ Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 14.

4. They asked that Paul continue to work with the poor. This is what the church becomes known for.

VII-14

Paul confronts the way in which Peter has reversed his attitude towards the lack of barriers within the family.

Paul accuses Peter and Barnabas of ‘not following the **truth** of the gospel message’.

What is this truth?

V 15-21:

This is the end of the beginning. Paul is setting the scene for the rest of the letter. What Paul said to Peter is the central truth of the letter: who you are.

The Jewish law – Torah.

This defined Israel as the people of God, it marked the covenant people.

The law was not a moral system by which the Jews might make themselves good enough to be the people of God, they were already that.

The law kept the Jews as the distinct people of God, but now in the Messiah something fresh has happened.

Ex 3:7, 13:9, 24:12

Without Temple or king or land who are we as Jews? We are the people who live by Torah!

With the destruction of Jerusalem came the end of sacrifices, and the people of Judah found themselves in exile without this means of expiation and reconciliation with God. In spite of this gap in their spiritual life, the Jews survived as a nation since they returned to the Torah as the main purpose of their existence. With the earliest emergence of the synagogue during the Babylonian exile, the Torah assumed the central role in Jewish life, never to be relinquished again, even through Second Temple times, where it existed side by side with a reemerging sacrificial ritual but always looming greater in significance than the

cultus.² (Cultus mean those practices that are demanded by the cult)

Justification:

Justification and righteousness come from the same root word – **δικαιόω**. Paul’s focus in this passage is not on how people get saved but on how they live as God’s covenant people. This word group has many shades of meaning with the idea of a judge making a just declaration to being in correct community with someone, especially God.

This fits with the problem that Paul is speaking about – who are you allowed to sit down and eat with and do you need to be circumcised?

Rom. 3:24, Phil. 3:8-9

Faithfulness of the Messiah:

Verse 16 is better read the ‘faith of Jesus Messiah’ rather than ‘faith in Jesus Messiah’. In the Greek both ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are here written in the genitive. This style of noun always reads with the possessive ‘of’ in relationship to the verb.

Here the faith belongs to Jesus, it is his faith or faithfulness that makes us right with God. Because Jesus was faithful to his mission, because he was faithful to death, then the Father raised him back to life and we can then enter into this ‘right relationship’ with God.

What do you think might be the implications of this change?

N T Wright speaking about Justification -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii5YHwrkEpQ>

² B. Grossfeld, “Torah,” ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 1241.