

Galatians

The Unencumbered Gospel of Jesus



Paul, Titus, and Timothy

Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised but refused to circumcise Titus?

The major contention some of the Jews had with Paul was that he refused to circumcise, and thus bind the Law, on the Gentiles (see Galatians 5:3). Up until that time, proselytes had to undergo circumcision if they wanted to enjoy the blessings of the covenant (Exodus 12:48).

One may think that Paul was inconsistent in his application of this truth because he had Timothy circumcised in Acts 16. Thus, from the passage cited above, Timothy would have been “obligated to keep the whole Law.”

There may not seem like a difference between Timothy and Titus, but there was one major distinction between the two disciples: one was the son of Jewish woman whereas the other was Greek. As we’ll see in today’s lesson, many of the believing Jews continued to keep the Law!



Paul and the Law of Moses

To what extent did Paul keep the Law?



To Be or Not to Be?

Did Paul preach that the Jews had to stop circumcision?



Liberty in Christ

What exactly does Paul mean by “freedom in Christ?”

Galatians 2:1-10

Galatians 2 recounts the conference in Jerusalem and identifies who was troubling the Galatians. It also shows the solidarity between the Jerusalem church and Paul.

Paul went by a revelation up to Jerusalem; he was not called or commanded to go by the apostles or elders of the church there. He was sent directly by God.

While he was there, none of the apostles or elders thought that Titus should be circumcised. Of course, there is no evidence they thought Cornelius's house should be either.

But there were some who had snuck into the assembly to try and corrupt the "truth of the gospel."

Despite these trouble makers, Peter, James, and John endorsed Paul's Law-free ministry to the Gentiles.



“Who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom in Christ...”

Peter, on the other hand, would continue to minister to Jewish believers, what Paul called the circumcision.

Unfortunately, the peace and fellowship seen at the end of the conference in Jerusalem was not to last. Peter and some of the other disciples still acted differently around the Gentile believers which sent the wrong message to the new converts and angered Paul.

REMEMBER THE POOR

The final message James, Peter, and John had for Paul and Barnabas was that they remember the poor. Paul, of course, was very eager to do that very thing. As he says later in the epistle, we are to do good to all people, especially those of God's house.

Remembering the poor is one way we show our love to Jesus. In the judgement scene recorded in Matthew 25, those who are accepted into life are accepted on the basis of their treatment of the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, and the needy. May we remember the poor in our lives as individuals and as a congregation!

