

Title: "The Litmus Test in Jerusalem" (Part 2)

Passage: Galatians 2:3-5

Theme: Part three of Paul's defense of his thesis (vv. 11-12)

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Ivy Illustration

little story I heard many yrs ago that's stuck w/me. Allegorical illust. of t/CH's doctrinal drift into apostasy.

An old church in England had a motto etched across the top of the granite doorway that read "We Preach Christ" And as often happens in England, ivy grows upon the buildings--as it did on this old church. The ivy grew across the front of the building, and before long all that could be read of the motto was "We Preach." And the ivy grew even more and the motto read "We." Then the church died... [adapted from John MacArthur, 1 Timothy, 143]

I hope you caught that. Symbolic of CH's (Xn schools & seminaries). Those who once upheld t/Gspl w/o comprom. – who once preached X – but has time goes on, like t/slow growth of ivy upon a building, the message of t/cross is replac. w/that of fallen men. All that's left is “we”

Much of what we see, for example, in t/US – a “we” centered CH.

[ii] Christ is the Gospel (we've been talking about t/past sev. weeks)

To preach X is to preach t/Gospel. In t/NT the phrase “to preach X” and “to preach the gospel” are used synonymously.

1 Corinthians 1:23 **but we preach Christ crucified . . .**

2 Corinthians 1:19 . . . **the Son of God, Christ Jesus . . . was preached among you . . .**

What did we see in Galatians 1:16?

[God was pleased] to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles . . .

[iii] That also ties into verses 1:11-12 – Paul's Thesis

In these 2 vv. TAP states t/main point he goes on to defend in t/rest of chapters 1 & 2.

For I would have you to know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

For I neither received it [the gospel] from man, nor was I taught it, but [I received it] through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Sum both of these verses up w/the statement:

Paul's gospel came directly from Christ who is the Gospel!

[iv] What we have is a defense of Paul's apostolic ministry and the message he preached

Paul & Barn. had est. CH's in southern Gal. during their 1st missionary journey & shortly after they left t/area false teachers arrived w/a different message – so Paul writes in 1:6-7:

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

We refer to these 1st c. false teachers as “the Judaizers” – Jewish nationalists who claimed to follow X but perv. His message. They taught that in order to be saved/peace w/God one had to believe in JC & keep t/law of Moses. Circum. was their badge of honor.

As for TAP - they claimed that he had changed. That he may have once preached a pure gospel as they defined it, but he had changed as he began to minister to Gentiles. To undercut his authority they claimed that Paul was a second-rate apostle, not of t/same pedigree as those in Jerusalem, men like Peter, James, and John.

As a result, t/Xns in Galatian were confused. *“Is it true that the Apostles in Jerusalem teach that we have to keep t/Law to be saved?”*
“Is Paul to be completely trusted?”

Many of them were in danger of denying t/cardinal doctrine of justification by grace alone apart from works.

[v] Paul takes up the role of a defense attorney

Out of 1:11-12 flow a courtroom drama where Paul takes his stand in front of t/tribunal & systematically unfolds a 4-part defense of his ministry and message.

[vii] 1:13-17 ==> Paul's First Defense “Jesus Not Jerusalem”

{read and summarize}

[viii] 1:18-24 ==> Paul's Second Defense “Only a Fortnight in Jerus”

{read and summarize}

[ix] Then we come to chapter 2:1-10 – Paul's Third Defense

“The Litmus Test in Jerusalem”

Paul's second trip to Jerusalem proves that there's harmony between Jerusalem and Antioch.

The Pillars and Paul sing in unison.

I. Paul's Third Defense: A Litmus Test in Jerusalem (2:1-10)

Last wk I'd hoped to get through vv. 1-5 but we only managed to get thru v. 2 (r 1st point) =>

A. The Consequent Journey to Jerusalem: Paul's Second Trip (vv. 1-2)

remember we asked a series of ?'s last week ==>

1. Company of Five Faithful Friends (questions)

when, who, why, what where?

a. When was the trip? (v. 1a)

Then, fourteen years later, I went up again to Jerusalem . . .

(1) 14 years after his conversion (1:18)

That's not 14 complete years as we might understand it.

Might capture t/thought better by translating this ==>

In the fourteenth year, I went up again to Jerusalem . . .

By ancient reckoning parts of a year are counted as whole years.

You could take a trip to Jerusalem late in the year 32 AD and leave early in t/year 34 spending 14 months there, and refer to your stay as covering 3 years (part of 32, all of 33, part of 34).

With that in mind, we do t/math and this second visit of Paul to Jerusalem happened somewhere between AD 44-46.

This would mean that the events of Gal 2:1–10 parallel the “famine visit” Paul and Barnabas made to Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 11:25–30.

b. Who went? (v. 1b)

with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

(we know that Barn. was with Paul during that 2d trip in Acts 11).

c. Why did they go? (v. 2a)

But it was because of a revelation that I went up.

Paul didn't go to Jer. because he was summoned there by Peter. "Paul, come to Jerusalem and give us a report of your ministry." No, Paul wasn't subject to their authority. He didn't go in response to t/call of men, but t/call of God [^]

(1) Fits with Acts 11:29-30

And he [Barnabas] left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

27 Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. 29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. 30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus – all near contemp. historians, record t/fact in their writings that there were food shortages at this time.

Collection is taken for t/brethren in Judea which P. & B. deliver to Jer.

That's t/connection to t/time of Paul's visit & t/events recorded here in Galatians 2:1-10.

d. What happened? (v. 2b)

. . . And I declared to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles . . .

(1) That's the issue as it relates to the book of Galatians

Does Paul preach an accurate Gospel? Does he preach to t/Gentiles t/same message that Peter preaches to t/Jews? Judaizers were claiming that it was a different message / Gospel. Here's a test case: t/Jewish preacher to t/Gentiles goes to Jer. to confer w/the preacher to t/Jews.

e. Where did it happen? (v. 2b) - "in private"

. . . but I did so in private to those who were of reputation . . .

Why was this meeting private? Paul tells us (last ?) ==>

f. What was Paul's concern? (v. 2c)

And I declared to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.

What Paul isn't saying is that he had doubts about what he taught // concerned that his gospel wasn't accurate. That sort of schizophrenic interpretation doesn't fit t/context.

Paul was an A. by t/direct ordin. of God (1:1) // warned about those who 'distort' t/Gospel. Paul was so confident of his message that he could say => *"If any man or angel comes to you preaching a gospel contrary to that which you heard from us, let him be accursed."*

f. What was Paul's concern? (v. 2c)

Not that he might have been preaching a faulty message t/past dozen years of his life, but that, should his mission & message be disapproved by those in Jerusalem, his ministry would be neg. affected & damage would be done to t/cause of X.

Think about it. Paul is under attack. FT'ers had infiltrated these fledgling CH's & they were telling these new believers that Paul gave them t/wrong message. No doubt t/Judaizers were slick salesmen. They knew their Bibles.

Had t/Jer. A's not accepted him, a wedge would be driven between Peter's ministry to t/Jews and Paul's to t/Gentiles. Rival factions could have no place in t/1st c. CH.

Acts 8:14–17 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

Samaria and Jerusalem had been at odds for centuries (John 4). There could be no rival CH's. It was essential that they be identified w/the apostles in Jerusalem.

In sim. fashion, while Paul wasn't under Peter's authority, it was necessary that they be on t/same page. Could be no rival factions of Jew vs. Gentile.

And I declared to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.

That was Paul's concern. But his concerns were unfounded ==>

Paul's second trip to Jerusalem proves that there's harmony between Jerusalem and Antioch. --- [The Pillars and Paul sing in unison.](#)

I. Paul's Third Defense: A Litmus Test in Jerusalem (2:1-10)

A. The Consequent Journey to Jerusalem: Paul's Second Trip (vv. 1-2)

B. The Confrontation in Jerusalem: Titus and the Test Case (vv. 3-5)

3 C's > Circumcision and Titus (v. 3); Christians In Name Only (v. 4); Celebrating the Freedom of the Gospel (vv. 4-5)

1. Circumcision and Titus (v. 3)

But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

a. What is Circumcision?

Many years ago, the very first SSC I taught as a young man around t/age of 20 was to a group of Jr.Hi schoolers. I think I was teaching in Philippians. We happened upon t/word “circumcision” in t/text & I was asked by 1 of t/kids, “What is that?” “Well, uh, it's when you take a knife & you uh, take, uh and cut the, uh..” “Better ask you parents.”

(1) Goes back to Genesis 17 (around 2100 BC)

Genesis 17:1–27 **1 NOW when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty” [’ēl šadday, 1st use in OT]; “Walk before Me, and be blameless. 2 “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.” 3 And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with**

him, saying, 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 “No longer shall your name be called Abram [exalted father], But your name shall be Abraham [father of many nations]; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.

9 God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

(2) Circumcision wasn't unique to Abraham or Israel

Was practiced elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Here God gives it a new meaning. Reminder to Abraham & his descendants of God's covt.

Was so essential to Israel that He adds:

14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

22 And when He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. 23 Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him. 24 Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his

foreskin. 26 In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

(a) What was the purpose of circumcision?

1. Mark of God's covenant w/Abraham.

Later in Israel's history, idea grew that the Messiah would only come when the Holy Land had been purified of all uncircumcised Gentiles.

2. Kept Israel Separate from t/pagan nations around her.

Illustration from Gen 34 - Dinah the daughter of Jacob & Leah was raped by Shechem a Hivite. And he wanted to take her as his wife. His father, Hamor, goes to Jacob and says: "give your daughter to my son in marriage; and intermarry with us & live with us."

Out for revenge, Jacob's sons deceitfully agree on t/condition that all t/men of their tribe be circumcised. They agreed. All were circumcised. And on t/3d day after their surgery, when they were in t/midst of t/painful recovery, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took a sword, came upon the city unawares, and killed every male, including Hamor and his son Shechem.

Roman historian Tacitus: 'They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference' (Hist. V.5.2).

3. Reminder that sin is transmitted through t/procreative act & that a blood sacrifice is needed to take away sin.

John Calvin: For the Jews, circumcision was the symbol by which they were admonished that whatever comes forth from man's seed, that is the whole nature of mankind, is corrupt and needs pruning. Moreover, circumcision was a token and reminder to confirm them in the promise given to Abraham of the blessed seed in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed [Gen 22:18], from whom they were also to await their own blessing. Now that saving seed (as we are taught by Paul) was Christ [Gal 3:16], in whom alone they trusted that they were to recover what they had lost in Adam. [Institutes]

4. Also prefigured the New Covenant (circumcision of t/heart by t/HS - Jeremiah 31)

Deut. 30:6 “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

Romans 2:28-29 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Circumcision for t/Jew was a big deal.

May be tempted to think that for Jews who had truly become Xns would understand that t/physical act wasn't t/issue. Not true.

Strong Jewish nationalism – esp. in and around Jerusalem.

a. Flow of thought ==>

But . . . (adversative / contrast)

(1) Go back to verses 1-2

1 Then, fourteen years later, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 But it was because of a revelation that I went up. And I declared to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles

But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

b. “Greek” = “Ἕλλην (Hellenization; Hellenistic; Hellenized)

Acts 6:1 **NOW** at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

(1) “Ἕλλην does not necessarily mean “Greek” as an ethnicity

Word stands for any non-Jew (Gentile). Hellenization under Alexander the Great brought Greek culture and language t/o the western world.

(2) One of the big themes of the NT relates to the distinction (or lack thereof) between Jews and Gentiles (Greeks)

Rom 1:16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

Romans 3:9 . . . for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks . . .

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

(3) Roots of Xnty = Jewish

OT ==> JC ==> X was a Jew (Gal. 4:4).

Romans considered Xnty a subset of Judaism.

First Xns were Jews

(4) Why an issue?

History of Israel has been one of distinction from t/rest of the world. Aspects of t/OT law were designed to keep t/Jews distinct from Gentiles. Circumcision was t/covt. mark of Abraham – t/father of t/Jews.

Regathering of t/Jews under Ezra & Nehemiah brings about t/close of t/OT.

Then what happens? Between 175 and 163 BC, Greek emperor Antiochus Epiphanes wages war against t/Jews, imposing Grk. customs on them.

He outlaws Jewish practices and orders the worship of Zeus as the supreme god (2 Maccabees 6:1–12).

When t/Jews resisted, Antiochus sent an army to enforce his decree. The city's destroyed, many are slaughtered.

2 Maccabees 6:1–11 an Athenian senator [forced] the Jews to abandon the customs of their ancestors and live no longer by the laws of God; also to profane the temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus, and that on Mount Gerizim to Zeus the Hospitable, as the inhabitants of the place requested...They also brought into the temple things that were forbidden, so that the altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the laws. A man could not keep the sabbath or celebrate the traditional feasts, nor even admit that he was a Jew. At the suggestion of the citizens of Ptolemais, a decree was issued ordering the neighboring Greek cities to act in the same way against the Jews: oblige them to partake of the sacrifices, and put to death those who would not consent to adopt the customs of the Greeks. It was obvious, therefore, that disaster impended. Thus, two women who were arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall. Others, who had assembled in nearby caves to observe the sabbath in secret, were betrayed to Philip and all burned to death.

Event. t/Jewish resistance found a leader in a priest named Mattathias. He had 5 sons who joined him in t/battle. One of t/sons was Judas ‘The Hammer’ Maccabeus. Judas led t/resistance to victory and purified t/Temple.

Forced circumcision of all uncircumcised Jews.

Circumcision was always a central mark of Jewish ID.

Josephus, Ant. i.192: God commanded Abraham to practise circumcision ‘to the intent that his posterity should be kept from mixing with others’.

Only the circumcised were Jews // members of the covenant // belonged to the people chosen by God.

During t/time of t/Maccabees. Eleazar, younger brother of Judas Maccabeus, ==> a king who became a proselyte without being circumcised: ‘In your ignorance, O king, you are guilty of the greatest offence against the law and thereby against God. For you ought not merely to read the law but also, and even more, to do what is commanded in it. How long will you continue to be uncircumcised? If you have not yet read the law concerning this matter, read it now, so that you may know what an impiety it is that you commit’ (Josephus, Ant. xx.44–5).

1 Then, fourteen years later, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 But it was because of a revelation that I went up. And I declared to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles

Would they receive Titus as a brother or demand that he be circumcised? Test case. Titus was an object lesson.

3 But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

c. Outcome of the private meeting was that “Titus was not compelled to be circumcised”

Some read this to mean that he did so voluntarily.

They cite Timothy's case.

(1) What about Timothy?

Acts 16:3 Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Diff. sit. Yes, Tim. agreed to be circum. But not for saly, but to avoid any stumbling blocks in the effort to reach t/Jews. Circum. was required to enter t/synagogues w/Paul for the preaching of the gospel. Timothy was also ½ Jew. Titus was 100% Gentile. Diff. sit.

There are times to adopt a cultural practice for sake of the Gospel. There are times to reject certain practices for that same Gospel. The issue is the context.

G. Ebeling has aptly put it: “The treatment of circumcision had become a test of the Christian faith. In historical terms, it must be decided whether Christianity is something other than a new Jewish sect. In theological terms, the decision is whether one’s relationship with Christ is dependent on being under the law, or the relationship to the law is dependent on being in Christ.” [cited in George, 142–145]

B. The Confrontation in Jerusalem: Titus and the Test Case (vv. 3-5)

1. Circumcision and Titus (v. 3)

2. Christians In Name Only (v. 4)

But it was because of the false brethren, secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us.

CINO = false brethren Paul refers to here.

a. Verses 4–5 represent an anacoluthon (incomplete thoughts)

Lightfoot overstates the case when he calls these two verses “a shipwreck of language.”

Paul’s thought running ahead of his dictation?

Emotion / strong feelings?

Luther: ‘Anyone who is inflamed while speaking cannot at the same time observe the grammatical rules’.

b. What’s Paul saying?

He uses words from t/world of political espionage.

One commentator paraphrases the thought:

“Now all this came about because certain false brothers, having been secretly smuggled into our ranks, disrupted our fellowship in order to spy on us and thereby subvert our freedom in Christ.” [George, 147]

(1) Who were they?

Same ones we read about in Acts 15 ==>

1 AND some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

5 But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

Paul, Barnabas, Titus are in a private meeting w/Peter, James, and John. And false brethren are there. Described as both being “secretly brought in,” & having “sneaked in.”

Better understood as 1 translation renders it:

Now this matter arose because of the false brothers with false pretenses who slipped in unnoticed . . . [NET]

Jude refers to false teachers who have “crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation.”

Peter likens them to t/false prophets of t/OT, false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies,

c. Paul refers to them as ψευδαδέλφους

Only here and 2 Cor. 11:26 (dangers from ψευδαδέλφους)

Christians in name only; Judaisers;

“sham Christians” [NEB] “pseudo-Christians” [Phillips]

These ψευδαδέλφους were those who were contending that Titus must be circumcised. Pressure to do so.

Herein we see a class of “pseudo-Christians” which has been endemic in the church in one form or another. (“I believe in Jesus; I also believe in abortion rights and gay marriage.”)

B. The Confrontation in Jerusalem: Titus and the Test Case (vv. 3-5)

1. Circumcision and Titus (v. 3)

2. Christians In Name Only (v. 4)

3. Celebrating the Freedom of the Gospel (vv. 4-5)

a. Contrast between vv. 4 and 5

. . . false brethren, secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us.

We did not yield to them in submission for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Slavery vs. Freedom. Bondage to the law vs. Liberty of sov. grace.

b. A theme we'll revisit time and again in Galatians – cf. 4:21-31

We did not yield to them in submission for even an hour . . .

Not for one second!

To be subject to preachers of a false gospel is to be in subjection to a false gospel itself.

Can't accept t/teachers w/o accepting the teaching. Danger of ecumenical partnerships based on anything but the truth of the gospel.

c. It's about truth – Gospel truth!

. . . so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

d. Two contrasting verses that demonstrate purpose or result

. . . false brethren, secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us.

We did not yield to them in submission for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

e. Note that phrase “truth of the gospel” - used again in 2:14

Later (2:15–21) Paul would spell out the implications of this in terms of justification by faith.

f. As it relates to the “truth of the gospel” there can be **no compromise**

(1) Paul's "sanctified stubbornness"

We did not yield to them in submission for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Luther was stubborn as well:

For the issue before us is grave and vital; it involves the death of the Son of God, who, by the will and command of the Father, became flesh, was crucified, and died for the sins of the world. If faith yields on this point, the death of the Son of God will be in vain. Then it is only a fable that Christ is the Savior of the world. Then God is a liar, for he has not lived up to his promises. Therefore our stubbornness on this issue is pious and holy; for by it we are striving to preserve the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to keep the truth of the gospel. If we lose this, we lose God, Christ, all the promises, faith, righteousness, and eternal life." [Luther's Works, 26.90–91]

h. "Litmus Test in Jerusalem" – Titus was a test case

Again quoting Luther:

'[Paul] took him [Titus] along then, in order to prove that grace was equally sufficient for Gentiles and Jews, whether in circumcision or without circumcision' [cited in Bruce, 107–108]

True – Titus was an uncircumcised Gentile. He was uncircumcised in the flesh, but circumcised in heart. Having believed in Jesus, he was justified by grace through faith in X. That, Paul said, was enough.

Jerusalem agreed. **The Pillars and Paul sing in unison!**