

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

INTRODUCTION: Paul details his additional meeting with the pillars of the Jerusalem church in this portion of his letter to the churches in Galatia. He's emphasizing that his ministry was met with approval by these leaders, even though certain detractors were attempting to subvert his apostolic authority.

Galatians 2:1-10

I. PAUL'S PRIVATE MEETING WITH JEWISH LEADERS vv.1-2

A. Paul travels to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus.

1. Barnabas was an early contributor to the church and was given his name, which meant "son of encouragement". *Acts 4:36-37*
2. Titus was an early Greek convert and a crucial partner in ministry with Paul. *2 Corinthians 8:23, Titus 1:4*
3. This 14 year time span is indicative of Paul's time ministering to the Gentiles, bringing proof to the effectiveness of his gospel.

B. He presents the gospel he preaches to the Gentiles privately to key leaders. v. 2

1. He went to Jerusalem, not by request of the Jewish leaders, but by revelation from God.
2. His goal there was to give a report of how the Gentiles were coming to Jesus.
3. This meeting was purposely and privately with the mature leaders of church.

C. The purpose is to ensure his ministry, both past and future, is not in vain or conflicts with the Jerusalem church.

1. There is a sense that Paul is seeking their approval.
2. Judaizers in the Galatian churches were presumptuous in conveying that the leaders in Jerusalem would agree with them.
3. Paul is setting the stage for disproving the fallacious teaching of the Judaizers. *Romans 14:5-6*

II. DEFENSE AGAINST REQUIRED CIRCUMCISION vv.3-5

A. Titus, a Greek companion was not forced to be circumcised.

1. He had been brought as an example of someone who was saved, yet not circumcised.
2. There was nothing in the Gospel that Paul preached, which would compel Titus to follow the Mosaic law.
3. An interesting point is that Paul later circumcised Timothy, but it was for different reasons. *Acts 16:1-3*

B. The issue arose due to “false brethren” who infiltrated the group to spy on their Christian liberty. v.4

1. It's uncertain exactly who these spies were or who sent them.
2. The obvious purpose was to find fault in the message of grace that Paul was preaching. *Mark 12:13*
3. Paul's awareness of this, was probably a motivating factor in going to Jerusalem.

C. Paul and his companions refused to submit to these demands, protecting the “truth of the gospel”. v.5

1. Even as Paul became aware of the Judaizers that were against him, he didn’t stop preaching grace.
2. Remember, earlier, he made it crystal clear that he was not interested in pleasing man. *Galatians 1:10, Romans 8:8*
3. His adamancy in staying true to the message revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, is what allowed him to eventually bring the same message to the churches in Galatia.

III. RECOGNITION OF PAUL’S AUTHORITY vv. 6-10

A. The Jerusalem leaders (those of reputation) added nothing new to Paul’s gospel message. v. 6

1. Paul notes that even though they had position, they were no better than him or any other believer. *Galatians 3:28*
2. The leaders didn’t have instructions of any sort that would change Paul’s message.
3. This meant that the message of salvation by grace through faith was complete. *Acts 4:19-20*

B. They recognize Paul was entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised. vv. 7-8

1. This was a recognition of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles.
2. Peter’s ministry would remain focused on the Jews. *Acts 11:18*

3. The blessing of this is that now the whole world was a possibility.
Matthew 28:19, Acts 9:15

C. The leaders come into agreement and make a request. vv. 9-10

1. Perceived comes from the Greek word *ginosko*, which means they “knew with certainty.”
2. By giving them the “right hand of fellowship” they came into a covenantal gesture of partnership between the Jewish and Gentile branches of the church.
3. The request of remembering the poor was most agreeable.
Acts 11:29-30, 1 Corinthians 16:1

CONCLUSION: Paul has laid out all these details to let the Galatians know that he has been in Jerusalem and discussed the very issues they are being deceived by. He is establishing his authority and connection with the church as a whole.