

November 20 Answers

- 1) The first theological **crisis** in the early church. The Jews began teaching the brothers: “Unless you are **circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be **saved**” (Acts 15:1). Paul’s response: ‘We Jews know that a person is justified by faith in Christ, not by **works** of the law. If we are not justified by faith in Christ—if we also need to be circumcised to be saved—then Christ’s work has left us in a **sinful** state, and He is the **minister** of sin! May it never be!’ (cf. Gal 2:16–17). The church agreed to send Paul, Barnabas and some of the others to Jerusalem to ask “the apostles and elders about this question.” However, before Paul and Barnabas left, word reached Paul from the new churches in Galatia. To his dismay, he discovered that the Galatians were **deserting** Christ and “turning to a different gospel” (Gal 1:6)—a gospel of Christ-plus-circumcision. Paul had several goals in mind as he wrote Galatians. First, he wanted to show that the “other gospel” of Christ-plus-circumcision was **heresy** (Gal 1–2). He did this by declaring that the gospel he preached came directly from **Christ**. Paul’s point was this: ‘If my gospel is from Christ—if it’s the true gospel—then any other gospel is false and thus heretical.’ Second, he wanted to persuade the Galatians to **return** to the true gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone (Gal 3–4). He did this by reminding them of their original conversion **experience** and showing them that the **Scriptures** confirmed salvation by faith in Christ alone.