

Galatians Chapter 2 Continued

Verses 11-13: A brief account of the darkest of days in the history of the gospel. By withdrawing from the Gentile believers to fellowship with the Judaizers who held a position he knew was wrong, Peter had in appearance supported their doctrine and nullified Paul's divine teaching. Especially the doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone (see notes on 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 John 10-11).

Galatians 2:11 "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

"Antioch" (see note on Acts 11:19). The location of the first Gentile church.

"He was to be blamed": Peter was guilty of sin by aligning himself with men he knew to be in error and because of the harm and confusion he caused his Gentile brethren.

We see in this, a confrontation between Paul and Peter. Since Paul was primarily ministering to Gentile believers and Peter was ministering to Jewish converts, it would be a natural thing for them to bring different messages. I do not believe this is speaking of that however. It appears there was a definite difference in Paul and Peter's belief.

This is in an area where Paul had preached more. It appears that Peter, from time to time, went around the area and checked on the churches. Many Jews had converted to Christianity, as well as the Gentiles. It appears that Peter was like an overseer.

Paul did not talk behind Peter's back, but met with him in person to accuse him of error. This trip to Antioch was probably quite a bit later than Paul's visit to Jerusalem that we read about in the last lesson.

Galatians 2:12 "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

"Certain came from James": Peter, knowing the decision the Jerusalem Council had made (Acts 15:7-29), had been in Antioch for some time, eating with Gentiles.

When Judaizers came, pretending to be sent by James, they lied, giving false claims of support from the apostles. Peter had already given up all Mosaic ceremony (Acts 10:9-22), and James had at times held only to some of it (Acts 21:18-26).

"Withdrew": The Greek term refers to strategic military withdrawal. The verb's form may imply that Peter's withdrawal was gradual and deceptive.

To eat with the Judaizers and decline invitations to eat with the Gentiles, which he had previously done, meant that Peter was affirming the very dietary restrictions he knew God had abolished (Acts 10:15). And thus striking a blow at the gospel of grace.

“Fearing them which were of the circumcision”: The true motivation behind Peter’s defection. He was afraid of losing popularity with the legalistic, Judaizing segment of people in the church, even though they were self-righteous hypocrites promoting a heretical doctrine.

“Them which were of the circumcision”: This refers to Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who were troubled about the Jewish Christians in Antioch, who were taking meals with gentiles, thus probably eating forbidden foods.

The question in Jerusalem was this: were Gentile Christians obligated to observe the law, of which circumcision is the sign? The answer was no (verses 1-10). Peter’s action in Antioch of withdrawing from Gentile meals raised another issue: were Jewish Christians also free from the law?

It seems that Peter had eaten with the Gentiles, until these men came from James. Peter withdrew himself (as the Jews had done in times past), from the Gentiles while the men from James were there. You remember, James was the head of the church in Jerusalem, which was almost entirely made up of Jewish converts.

Peter it seemed, did not want a report going back to James of his fellowshiping with the Gentiles. It appears to me, from this that perhaps the teaching of the keeping of the law by the converted Jews has come from James. Peter did not want a bad report going back to James.

Galatians 2:13 "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."

“And the other Jews” The Jewish believers in Antioch.

“Likewise with him”: (Hypocrisy). A Greek word referring to an actor who wore a mask to depict a mood or certain character. In the spiritual sense, it refers to someone who masks his true character by pretending to be something he is not (Matt. 6:1-6). They were committed to the gospel of grace, but pretended to accept Jewish legalism.

"Dissembled" could be said, “acted hypocritically.” The detrimental effect of Peter’s action was to influence other Jewish Christians to separate themselves from their Gentile brethren. Even the spiritual giant Barnabas, who had championed Gentile freedom (in verses 1-9), “was carried away with their dissimulation” (hypocrisy).

The hypocrisy here was the false impression left by their behavior; they really believed it was all right to eat with Gentiles, but acted as though these convictions were not theirs.

“Dissembled” in the verse above, means to act hypocritically in concert with. “Dissimulation” means hypocrisy, deceit, or condemnation. This then, is a terrible accusation of Paul against Peter.

Until this happened, Paul had thought the last one to do this would be Barnabas. For anyone to be one way in front of one group of people, and be another way in front of another group would be hypocrisy.

We must remember however, that the church was in its formative stage here. It was very difficult for those who had begun with the law (even Paul), to just be transformed overnight in their thinking, and do an about face on all the things they had been taught. Part of their problem arose from the fact that, they had separate rules for the Jews and the Gentiles.

Even Paul, sometimes conformed to the wishes of the people around him when he made decisions, such as when he circumcised Timothy. In those early days, they did things, they would not have done later to try to get into a certain group to preach. They bowed to the customs of the people, so they would be allowed to preach there.

Galatians 2:14 "But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before [them] all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

“Uprightly”: Literally to walk “straight” or “uprightly.” By withdrawing from the Gentile Christians; Peter and the other Jewish believers were not walking in line with God’s Word.

“Truth of the gospel” (see note on verse 5).

“Livest after the manner of Gentiles”: Before his gradual withdrawal, Peter regularly had fellowship and ate with the Gentiles, thus modeling the ideal of Christian love and liberty between Jew and Gentile.

“Compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews”: By his Judaizing mandate, he was declaring theirs was the right way.

“They walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel:” That is, “They were not acting rightly regarding the truth of the gospel.” The gospel teaches that a person is saved by grace, not by law. Therefore, he is not obligated as a Christian to live under the law.

“Thou ... livest after the manner of Gentiles:” Peter was living like a Gentile in that he was mixing freely with Gentile believers and not observing Jewish custom. He was eating Gentile foods. Yet Peter compelled “the Gentiles to live as do the Jews”, in separating himself from them.

By refusing to eat with them he left Gentile believers no alternative but to either adopt Jewish dietary regulations, or suffer a split in their church. In short, Peter was forcing them to become

Jewish proselytes. Peter's hypocrisy lay not in his observing Jewish laws, but in making Gentiles keep them.

Paul is questioning Peter, why he lived one way before these Jewish brothers arrived, and then changed when they came. Even though Peter knew the Gentiles had been accepted of God in their uncircumcised condition, he still felt that it would be good if they would not fight the Jews on this issue. It seems that many of the Christians were afraid of the Jews.

It appears to me that Paul is saying, make up your mind whether you are a Jew or a Christian, and live accordingly. Let the Gentiles alone. If they are good enough for God in the condition He called them, then leave them alone. Do not try to make them conform to Jewish customs.

Verses 15-16: Paul's rebuke of Peter serves as one of the most dynamic statements in the New Testament on the absolute and unwavering necessity of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith (see note on Rom. 3:24). Peter's apparent repentance acknowledged Paul's apostolic authority and his own submission to the truth (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Galatians 2:15 "We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,"

"Sinners of the Gentiles": This is used in the legal sense since Gentiles were sinners by nature because they had no revealed divine written law to guide them toward salvation or living righteously.

"Sinners" is a derogatory term almost synonymous with Gentiles. Since Gentiles did not live under the law, their immorality was usually worse than that of the Jews, whose behavior was generally restrained by the law. So in Jewish opinion Gentiles were, by the nature of the case, sinners.

Paul is saying that he too, had been a Jew by birth. "Sinners of the Gentiles" is a sarcastic remark about how the Jews had always looked down on the Gentiles.

Verses 15-16: Even though Jews are in some respects not outwardly "sinners" like Gentiles, they still know one cannot be justified by observing the law but only by faith in Christ. Paul therefore affirms that "even we" [Jews], "have believed in Jesus Christ" in order to be saved.

To be "justified" is to be accounted by God as acceptable to him. This occurs "not ... by the works of the law" [meritorious works], "but by the faith of" [in] "Jesus Christ" (i.e., by relying on Christ's atoning death).

Galatians 2:16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

“Works ... faith”: Three times in this verse Paul declares that salvation is only through faith in Christ and not by law. The first is general, “a man” in not justified”; the second is personal, “we might be justified”; and the third is universal, “no flesh be justified.”

“Justified”: This basic forensic Greek word describes a judge declaring an accused person not guilty and therefore innocent before the law.

Throughout Scripture it refers to God’s declaring a sinner not guilty and fully righteous before Him by imputing to him the divine righteousness of Christ and imputing the man’s sin to his sinless Savior for punishment (see notes on Rom. 3:24; Phil. 3:8-9).

“Works of the law”: Keeping the law is a totally unacceptable means of salvation because the root of sinfulness is in the fallenness of man’s heart, not his actions. The law served as a mirror to reveal sin, not a cure for it (see notes on 3:22-24; Rom. 7:7-13; 1 Tim. 1:8-11).

Paul is reminding Peter and the others, that even though they had been Jews, they had to come to Christ through faith, not works. It was not the keeping of the law that saved Abraham. His faith was counted unto him as righteousness. By the law, no one would be saved, because all have sinned and deserve death.

"Justified", means just as if I had never sinned. Look with me, at the next Scriptures which say it so well.

Romans 3:19-24 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin." "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;" "Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:" "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

This next Scripture says it all. Romans 3:28 "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Galatians 2:17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, [is] therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid."

“We ... also are found sinners”: If the Judaizers’ doctrine was correct, then Paul, Peter, Barnabas and the other Jewish believers fell back into the category of sinners because they had been eating and fellowshiping with Gentiles, who according to the Judaizers were unclean.

“Minister of sin: If the Judaizers were right, then Christ was wrong and had been teaching people to sin because He taught that food could not contaminate a person (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:13-15). He also declared that all who belong to Him are one with Him and therefore each other (John 17:21-23).

Paul's airtight logic condemned Peter, because by his actions he had in effect made it appear as if Christ was lying. This thought is utterly objectionable and caused Paul to use the strongest Greek negative ("certainly not", 3:21; Rom. 6:1-2; 7:13).

The Judaizers' objection to this doctrine of justification by faith alone is this: If a Jew seeks "to be justified by Christ" apart from the law he is then outside the law and thus a "sinner" like the Gentiles. The Judaizers fear that a Christian outside the law will lead an immoral life since his conduct is no longer restrained by the law.

Followed to its logical conclusion, under this theory "Christ" is "the minister of sin." That is, He promotes sin and encourages His followers to transgress. But the apostle's exclamation, "God forbid," denies this false teaching.

A Christian is a believer in and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have made Christ the Lord of our life, then we no longer make our decisions. Christ makes the decisions. Christ will never decide to sin. The Lord Jesus Christ will not live in the person who habitually sins. We must let Jesus Christ become so real in our lives that we will be a reflection of Him.

Galatians 2:18 "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."

"Which I destroyed": The false system of salvation through legalism (see note on 1:13), done away with by the preaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone.

"For" confirms the denial that Jesus, by the doctrine of justification alone, would encourage sin. To "build again" is to reinstate "the things" (the demands of the law), which one previously "destroyed" (i.e., renounced).

Paul declares that "I make myself a transgressor" if he again puts himself under the law which he formerly abandoned. How? The law awakens and incites sin in a man (Rom. 7:7-11). So, to obligate oneself again to the law is to put oneself under that legal system which awakens sin. Christ removes the law, thus delivering him from sin.

This is just saying if you go back into sin after you have received forgiveness for the sin, you make yourself a transgressor. "Transgressor" here, means, violator or breaker. God gives us freedom from sin. It is our obligation to live in the salvation provided for us.

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Galatians 2:19 "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

"Dead to the law": When a person is convicted of a capital crime and executed, the law has no further claim on him. So it is with the Christian who has died in Christ (who paid the penalty for

his sins in full), and rises to new life in Him, justice has been satisfied and he is forever free from any further penalty (see notes on Rom. 7:1-6).

“For” substantiates the declaration that it is the law, not Christ, which promotes sin. To be “dead to the law” is to be free from the obligation to obey it. This freedom came “through the law.” The law’s intention, by awakening and revealing man’s sin, was to lead him to Christ, who alone could properly deal with his sin (3:19-25).

The purpose of being freed from the law is that the Christian “might live unto” [for], “God.” For the whole of his earthly Christian life the believer is to live for God’s sake, obeying, serving, and glorifying Him.

Jesus became our substitute for our sin on the cross. He fulfilled the law for each of us who will accept it. The law is of none effect in the believer. The price has been paid in full.

Romans 7:5-6 "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter."

Sin for the Christian, died on the Lord's body on the cross. We live in Him.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

“I am crucified with Christ” (see notes on Rom. 6:2-6). When a person trusts in Christ for salvation, he spiritually participates with the Lord in His crucifixion and His victory over sin and death.

“Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”: The believer’s old self is dead (see note on Eph. 4:22), having been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:3, 5). The believer’s new self has the privilege of the in-dwelling Christ empowering him and living through him (see notes on Rom. 8:9-10).

“Gave himself for me”: The manifestation of Christ’s love for the believer through His sacrificial death on the cross (John 10:17-18; Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 5:25-30).

To be “crucified with Christ” means the believer has been freed from the law (verse 19), and from the ruling power of sin that was aroused by the law. “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” is interpreted, “And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Since the believer has been freed from the law and sin, the old sinful life no longer asserts itself as formerly. Instead, “Christ liveth in me;” that is, Jesus cultivates within the believer (Paul), His own desires, virtues, character and power, thus morally transforming him and working through him on others.

Paul lives his current Christian life “by the faith of” [in], “the Son of God,” that is, by depending on Him for strength and all necessities.

This tells exactly what happens to the believer in Christ. My flesh must be crucified that my spirit might live. That spirit took up a dwelling place in my body. The soul is the will. My spirit and my body are constantly fighting for control of my will. When I become a Christian and make Jesus Christ Lord of my life, my flesh loses this battle. The Spirit of the risen Christ takes up abode in me, and He is in control of me.

I have turned my will over to God. It is my faith in God which gave me the confidence to turn myself over to the will of God. Christ lives in me to the glory of God. There is no need for me to worry, because He has everything under control. Temptations fade away, because I have turned the decision making over to Him. Christ in me, the hope of glory.

Galatians 2:21 "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Paul concluded that Peter, by taking his stand with the Judaizers and thus against Christ, was in effect denying the need for God’s grace and thereby nullifying the benefit of Christ’s death.

“Righteousness” (see note on Rom. 1:17).

“Christ is dead in vain”: Those who insist they can earn salvation by their own efforts undermine the foundation of Christianity and render unnecessary the death of Christ.

“Frustrate” (nullify): Paul is pointing out that one would deny “the grace of God” by accepting Christ’s atonement and then viewing His atonement as having little value, reverting back to the law in order to secure salvation. “For”, gives the reason Paul does not attempt to nullify God’s grace. It is not owing to “righteousness” [i.e., salvation], “by the law.”

If that were the case, “then Christ” died needlessly. These words bring Paul’s strong rebuke (verses 14-21), of his fellow apostle to a close. Peter’s return to the law, having believed in Jesus, was like an admission that Christ’s sacrifice was inadequate; his hypocrisy diluted God’s grace by attempting to add his works to it.

But Peter’s evident silence in receiving Paul’s reproof shows that he acknowledged Paul’s charge as correct. Peter then, recognized Paul’s gospel to be genuine.

If we could have been saved by the law, then it would have been useless for Jesus to give His body on the cross for us.

Romans 10:3 "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Hebrews 7:11 "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need [was there] that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"

Galatians 3:21 "[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

The law was our schoolmaster to reveal to us how badly we needed a Savior. Christ gave His body on the cross that we might live. He purchased our salvation with His precious blood. He quickens our spirit to eternal life in Him.

Galatians Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. Who was Paul primarily ministering to?
2. Who was Peter ministering to primarily?
3. What had Peter done before certain men came from James, that he was not doing after they came?
4. Why had Peter done this?
5. What does this indicate?
6. What does "dissembled" mean in verse 13?
7. What is Paul accusing Peter of being?
8. What is one thing we need to keep in mind about these churches?
9. Sometimes, to be able to preach in a certain area, they bowed to the _____ of the people.
10. In verse 14, what does Paul say to Peter?
11. Paul is saying, if these Gentiles are alright with God, _____ .
12. What was Paul, by nature?
13. What did the statement "sinners of the Gentiles" mean?
14. Man is not justified by the works of the _____ .
15. What does justify mean in the sight of God?

16. Who can be justified by the law?
17. How had even these Jews come to Christ?
18. What was counted unto Abraham as righteousness?
19. What does justified mean?
20. By the law is the knowledge of _____.
21. What had Paul concluded from Romans chapter 3 verse 28?
22. What is a Christian?
23. How can a Christian make himself a transgressor?
24. What does transgressor mean?
25. I am dead to the law that I might live unto _____.
26. Memorize and quote Galatians chapter 2 verse 20.
27. What does the author believe about the spirit, the body, and the soul?
28. What would cause the Lord Jesus Christ to be dead in vain?