

# Galatians 2 Commentary

PREVIOUS

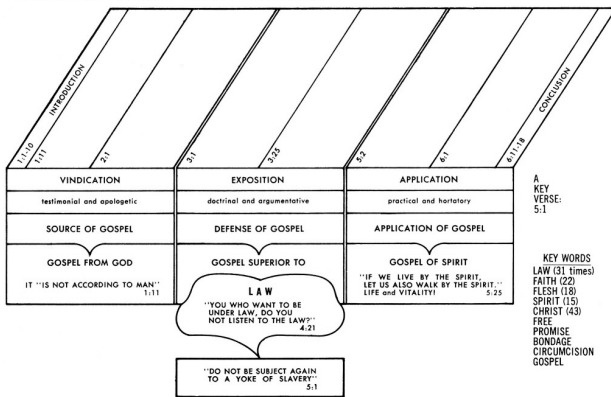
NEXT

**CLICK VERSE**  
To go directly to that verse

- Galatians 2:1
- Galatians 2:2
- Galatians 2:3
- Galatians 2:4
- Galatians 2:5
- Galatians 2:6
- Galatians 2:7
- Galatians 2:8
- Galatians 2:9
- Galatians 2:10
- Galatians 2:11
- Galatians 2:12
- Galatians 2:13
- Galatians 2:14
- Galatians 2:15
- Galatians 2:16
- Galatians 2:17
- Galatians 2:18
- Galatians 2:19
- Galatians 2:20
- Galatians 2:21

Paul Confronts Cephas  
Galatians 2:11

"Magna Charta of spiritual emancipation" Favorite epistle of the Reformers.



MAGNA CARTA OF SPIRITUAL EMANCIPATION  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - Galatians - Charles Swindoll

Click to Enlarge

| SUMMARY CHART:<br>EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS   |                                  |   |   |  |  |                                   |  |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Gospel of Grace<br/>Defended</b>  |                                  | <b>Gospel of Grace<br/>Explained</b>        |   |  | <b>Gospel of Grace<br/>Applied</b>               |                                   |  |
| Defense of the Gospel<br>Gal 1:1-2:21  |                                  | Freedom from Legalism<br>Gal 3:1-4:31       |   |  | Freedom to Love and to Serve<br>Gal 5:1-6:18     |                                   |  |
| Labor  |                                  | Liberty                                     |   |  | Life   |                                   |  |
| Authority<br>Not Opinion   |                                  | Freedom<br>Not Bondage                      |   |  | Spirit<br>Not Flesh                              |                                   |  |
| Personal<br>Autobiography  |                                  | Doctrinal<br>Accuracy                       |   |  | Practical<br>Application                         |                                   |  |
| Paul the Apostle<br>(Gal 1:1-24)   | Paul's Authority<br>(Gal 2:1-21) | Justified by Faith not Works<br>(Gal 3:1-9) | Justified by Faith not the Law<br>(Gal 3:10-4:20) | Grace and Law Cannot Co-Exist<br>(Gal 4:21-31) | Position and Practice of Liberty<br>(Gal 5:1-15) | Power of Liberty<br>(Gal 5:16-26) | Performance in Liberty<br>(Gal 6:1-18) |
| Vindication  |                                  | Exposition                                  |   |  | Application                                      |                                   |  |
| Testimonial and Apologetic   |                                  | Doctrinal and Argumentative                 |   |  | Practical and Hortatory                          |                                   |  |
| Biographical Explanation   |                                  | Doctrinal Exposition                        |   |  | Practical Exhortation                            |                                   |  |
| Authentication of Liberty  |                                  | Argumentation for Liberty                   |   |  | Application of Liberty                           |                                   |  |
| <p><b>Style or Tone:</b> Vigorous, blunt, aggressive, direct, corrective, urgent, brief, righteous anger, strong words</p> |                                  |   |   |  |  |                                   |  |
| <p><b>Theme:</b> Justification by Faith and not by Works of the Law</p>  |                                  |   |   |  |  |                                   |  |
| <p><b>Author:</b> Paul in large letters (Gal 6:11)</p>   |                                  |   |   |  |  |                                   |  |
| <p><b>Recipients:</b> Churches in Galatia (Gal 1:2) (Most likely the Southern Region)</p>                                  |                                  |   |   |  |  |                                   |  |

**CONTRAST OF GRACE AND LAW**

| LAW  | GRACE  |
|--|--|
| The law prohibits                            | Grace invites and gives                          |
| The law condemns the sinner                  | Grace redeems the sinner.                        |
| The law says DO                              | Grace says IT IS DONE.                           |
| The law says, Continue to be holy            | Grace says, It is finished.                      |
| The law curses                               | Grace blesses                                    |
| The law slays the sinner                     | Grace makes the sinner alive.                    |
| The law shuts every mouth before God         | Grace opens the mouth to praise God.             |
| The law condemns the best man                | Grace saves the worst man.                       |
| The law says, pay what you owe               | Grace says, I freely forgive you all.            |
| The law says "the wages of sin is death"     | Grace says, "the gift of God is eternal life."   |
| The law says, "the soul that sins shall die" | Grace says, Believe and live.                    |
| The law reveals sin                          | Grace atones for sin.                            |
| By the law is the knowledge of sin           | By grace is redemption from sin.                 |
| The law was given by Moses                   | Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.            |
| The law demands obedience                    | Grace bestows and gives power to obey.           |
| The law was written on stone                 | Grace is written on the tables of the heart.     |
| The law was done away in Christ              | Grace abides forever.                            |
| The law puts us under bondage                | Grace sets us in the liberty of the sons of God. |

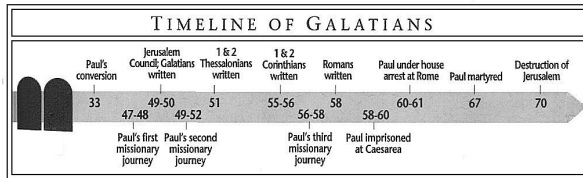
**CONTRASTS IN GALATIANS**

(From Irving Jensen & Merrill Unger)

| CHAPTER | THE LOWER  | THE HIGHER   |
|---------|--|--|
| 1-2     | Lost in Adam all die<br>Physically in Adam<br>Another Gospel (false)<br>Man's Reasoning                                    | Saved in Christ all live<br>Spiritually in Christ<br>The Genuine Gospel<br>God's Revelation                                  |
| 3-4     | Law Works curse of death<br>Condemnation by Works<br>Servants in Bondage (Defeat)<br>Old Covenant<br>(Symbolized by Hagar) | Grace Faith blessing of life<br>Justification by Faith<br>Sons in Freedom (Victory)<br>New Covenant<br>(Symbolized by Sarah) |
| 5-6     | Living in the Flesh<br>Works of the Flesh<br>Falling from grace<br>World or self object of glorying                        | Walking by the Spirit<br>Fruit of the Spirit<br>Standing Firm in Grace<br>The Cross the sole object of glorying              |

**An Outline of Galatians - D Edmond Hiebert**

2. How his Gospel was confirmed by the apostles at Jerusalem (2:1-10)
  - a. The circumstances of its presentation to them (Galatians 2:1-2)
    - i. The journey to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1-2a)
    - ii. The presentation made at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:2b)
  - b. The outcome of his presentation of his Gospel to them (Galatians 2:3-10)
    - i. The maintenance of his position, as seen in Titus (Galatians 2:3)
    - ii. The conflict with the false brethren (Galatians 2:4-5)
      - a. The presence of the false brethren (Galatians 2:4)
      - b. The refusal to yield to their demands (Galatians 2:5)
    - iii. The approval of his Gospel by the Jerusalem leaders (Galatians 2:6-10)
      - a. Their failure to add anything to his Gospel (Galatians 2:6)
      - b. Their approval of his Gospel in full (Galatians 2:7-10)
        1. The basis of their approval (Galatians 2:7-9a)
        2. The expression of their approval (Galatians 2:9b)
        3. The one request with their approval (Galatians 2:10)
3. How he rebuked Peter's inconsistent conduct (2:11-21)
  - a. The circumstances when giving the rebuke (Galatians 2:11-13)
    - i. The fact of his rebuke of Peter (Galatians 2:11)
    - ii. The reason for his rebuke of Peter (Galatians 2:12)
    - iii. The effect of the inconsistent conduct of Peter (Galatians 2:13)
  - b. The justification for giving the rebuke (Galatians 2:14-21)
    - i. His question of rebuke to Peter (Galatians 2:14)
    - ii. His explanation of his doctrinal position (Galatians 2:15-21)
      - a. The insufficiency of the law (Galatians 2:15-18)
        1. The discovery of believing Jews about justification (Galatians 2:15-16)
        2. The rejection of a conclusion from Peter's action (Galatians 2:17)
        3. The significance of a return to law-works (Galatians 2:18)
      - b. The new life in Christ (Galatians 2:19-21)
        1. The effect of the law led to the new life (Galatians 2:19)
        2. The nature of the new life (Galatians 2:20)
        3. The grace of God nullified by law-keeping (Galatians 2:21)



Click to Enlarge  
Source: [Bible Study Bible](#)

**Galatians 2:1** Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

Amplified: THEN AFTER [an interval] of fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem. [This time I went] with Barnabas, taking Titus along with [me] also.

Phillips Fourteen years later, I went up to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas, and we took Titus with us.

NET Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem again with Barnabas, taking Titus along too.

GNT Galatians 2:1 περὶ αὐτῶν δεκάτεσσιν ἔτεσιν ἦν πάλιν μετὰ Βαρνάβου συμπαραλάβων καὶ Τίτον·

Greek - Epeita dia dekatessaron eton palin anebēn (AAI) eis Hierosolyima meta Barnaba symparalabōn (AAP) kai Titon

NLT Galatians 2:1 Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too.

KJV Galatians 2:1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

ESV Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

ASV Galatians 2:1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.

CSB Galatians 2:1 Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

NIV Galatians 2:1 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.

NKJ Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

NRS Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

YLT Galatians 2:1 Then, after fourteen years again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, having taken with me also Titus;

NAB Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

NJB Galatians 2:1 It was not until fourteen years had gone by that I travelled up to Jerusalem again, with Barnabas, and I took Titus with me too.

GWN Galatians 2:1 Then 14 years later I went to Jerusalem again with Barnabas. I also took Titus along.

BBE Galatians 2:1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me.

YLT Then, after fourteen years again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, having taken with me also Titus;

- **Then after an interval of fourteen years:** Ga 1:18
- **I went up again to Jerusalem:** Acts 11:27-30+ or Acts 15:2-4
- **Barnabas:** Ga 2:13 Ac 4:36,37 11:25,30 12:25 13:2,50 14:12 15:25,36-39 1Co 9:6 Col 4:10
- **Titus:** Ga 2:3 2Co 8:16,23 Titus 1:4
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL'S JERUSALEM JOURNEY FOURTEEN YEARS LATER

**James Montgomery Boice** writes that "Chapter 2 begins a significantly different section of Paul's argument. There is a connection, of course. Paul is still speaking of his apostolic authority. But now he wants to demonstrate the essential unity existing between himself and the Twelve, whereas in chapter 1 his focus was on his independence from them. There are four important differences between the first ten verses of this chapter and those preceding it: (1) There is a new subject—not the source of Paul's gospel, but the nature of the gospel itself centered in the issue of circumcision for Gentiles; (2) there is a new aspect of Paul's relationship to the Twelve—not independence from them, as during the early years of his ministry, but harmony and cooperation; (3) there is a new period of Paul's ministry and of early church history; and (4) there is a new conclusion—namely, that in the essential content of the gospel and of the plan for missionary activity, Paul and the Twelve were one. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 10: Romans through Galatians](#) - 1977)

**Donald Campbell** - While chapter 2 continues Paul's defense of his apostolic authority and the gospel he preached, he focused not on the source of his message but on its content. Further, whereas in chapter 1 he emphasized his independence from the other apostles, he now demonstrated that there was a basic unity between himself and them. (BKC)

**Leon Hyatt** summarizes Galatians 2:1-10 - The fifth event Paul mentioned that confirmed he received his doctrine from God and not from men was a visit he made to Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion. He said he went to Jerusalem on that occasion because God revealed to him he should go. He took Barnabas and Titus with him to confirm his testimony about the results he was having from preaching the Gospel to Gentiles. In Galatians 2:1-19, Paul says that, when he got to Jerusalem, he presented his doctrine to three key leaders of the church. Those leaders were James, Cephas (Peter), and John, though others also were present. James was Jesus' half-brother and pastor of the church in Jerusalem. Cephas and John were two of Jesus' twelve apostles. Paul met with them in private because they were recognized as pillars in the church, and he wanted them to be aware of his understanding of the Gospel before he revealed it to the whole church. He wanted to confirm to them that he was not working in vain but was preaching the truth, as God had revealed it to Him. When he explained to James, Cephas, and John the Gospel he was preaching, he introduced Titus as evidence that Gentiles were responding to the Gospel. Titus was a young Greek who had not been circumcised but who had accepted Jesus and was assisting with the work in Antioch. When Paul introduced Titus, some intruders, who had come into the meeting uninvited, objected and said Titus could not be saved because he had not been circumcised. A debate resulted in which Saul and Barnabas did not yield an inch in holding to their convictions. In the end James, Cephas, and John agreed that Titus was a true believer and did not need to be circumcised. They also agreed that Saul and Barnabas were preaching the same doctrine they were preaching. They had nothing to add to Saul and Barnabas' doctrine. They only asked Paul and Barnabas to be sure they did not preach God's grace in such a way as to eliminate the importance of caring for the poor. Saul and Barnabas assured them they had that same concern and that they gladly accepted the advice. James, Cephas, and John shook hands with Saul, Barnabas, and Titus to show that they accepted that Saul and Barnabas were called to preach the Gospel to the nations (Gentiles), while James, Cephas, and John were called to preach the same Gospel to the Jews. ([Galatians 2:1-10 Commentary](#))

Hansen - In the previous section of his autobiography (Galatians 1:17-24) Paul has been describing the nature of his relationship with the original apostles in Jerusalem to show that he had been commissioned directly by God, not by the apostles, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He has worked independently from them; he is not their messenger boy. In fact his contact with them has been minimal. He did not visit them until three years after his conversion; and then he spent only two weeks with Peter in Jerusalem in order to get acquainted with him. On that trip to Jerusalem, the only other apostle he saw was James. After that time he remained unknown to the churches in Judea except for the good reports they heard about his evangelistic work in the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. It was a long time before Paul met again with the apostles in Jerusalem, not until fourteen years after his conversion, or about eleven years after his first visit (Galatians 2:1). ([The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Galatians 2](#))

**Max Anders** says: In chapter 2, Paul informs the Galatian Christians "I am a true apostle, and two proofs demonstrate that my gospel of grace is true. First, it is true because the apostles and leaders in Jerusalem approved my gospel of grace and authenticated my apostleship. Second, my gospel of grace is true because I confronted and corrected the apostle Peter when he was showing preference to the Judaizers and their false system of legalism. Such a bold and uncontested act validates my apostolic authority and message." (HNCT-Galatians)

### SUMMARY OF PAUL'S FIVE VISITS TO JERUSALEM

**FIRST VISIT** - After he left Damascus and stayed with Peter 15 days (Acts 9:26-30+; Galatians 1:18-20+)

**SECOND VISIT** - Famine visit with no record of meeting other apostles (Acts 11:27-30+; some favor Galatians 2:1-10 referring to this visit)

**THIRD VISIT** - The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29+; some favor Galatians 2:1-10 referring to this visit)

**FOURTH VISIT** - At the end of the second missionary journey (Acts 18:22+)

**FIFTH VISIT** - His final resulted in his arrest and taken to prison in Caesarea (Acts 21:15+ to Acts 23:35+)

**Then after an interval of fourteen years** - The question is **fourteen years** after what event - Paul's conversion or his first visit to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30+; Galatians 1:18-20+)? There is disagreement among scholars regarding whether this refers to Paul's **SECOND VISIT** or his **THIRD VISIT** to Jerusalem.

**KJV Bible Commentary** summarizes the two interpretations of **fourteen years** - If **fourteen years** after his conversion, it could be his visit recorded in Acts 11:27-30+; but if **fourteen** after his first visit, it would be the one recorded in Acts 15:1-6+. Scholars are divided. J. B. Lightfoot and others (ED: JOHN MACARTHUR, HENDRIKSEN, ROBERTSON, J VERNON MCGEE, LENSKI, DE HAAN, GAEBELEIN, BARKER, JAMIESON) hold to the traditional view (Acts 15:1-6+) but Sir William Ramsay and many contemporary scholars (ED: SWINDOLL, CONSTABLE, RYRIE, DONALD CAMPBELL) hold to the other view (Acts 11:27-30+). The evidence is not conclusive, so we must be tolerant, and not dogmatic (1 Cor 13:12-13). The exact date is important in establishing the chronology of Paul's mission but not in the exposition of his message. ([KJV Commentary](#))

**Criswell** say "The phrase **"after...fourteen years"** may be understood as 14 years from the time of Paul's **conversion**, in which case this visit would be equated with the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11:29, 30+ at the time of the great famine there (A.D. 46-47+). However, the phrase may also mean 14 years after the last event discussed, which is Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion (Gal 1:18). If this be the case, the meeting described in Galatians 2:1-10 corresponds with the **Jerusalem Conference** recorded in Acts 15:1-29+ (A.D. 49 or 50). If this latter reconstruction is correct, Paul probably omits the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11 from his discussion in Galatians because he is recounting his contacts with the apostles, with whom he probably did not meet at that time. The difference in the meetings in Galatians 2 and Acts 15, then, may be due to the fact that ch. 2 describes the private meeting Paul had with the church leaders, while Acts 15 describes the meeting held with the entire church over the matter of Gentile salvation. ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Leon Hyatt** favors **fourteen years** after his conversion but adds either way "Paul's point in referring to the length of time between his conversion and this visit to Jerusalem was to show that he had been preaching his Gospel for a long time before he went to Jerusalem and explained his doctrine to recognized Christian leaders."

**Don Anderson** also favors Galatians 2 as occurring at the Jerusalem Council and gives us a six point summary to help keep the chronology of events straight...

1. The DAMASCUS ROAD experience.
2. He then went away into ARABIA—some 50 to 75 miles east of Damascus.
3. He came back to DAMASCUS for the rest of the three-year period involved in this whole operation and ministry in the north.
4. He then went to JERUSALEM for a two-week retreat. This was 130 miles southwest of Damascus; and there he met with Peter and James, the brother of our Lord.
5. He then went north and homeward bound to SYRIA and CILICIA. Because of opposition in Jerusalem he went 60 miles northwest to Caesarea and there he took a boat for the 300 mile trip north to his home territory, Tarsus of Cilicia.
6. After FOURTEEN YEARS, he then returned to JERUSALEM. (Read Acts 14:26-15:4+) ([Note](#))

**I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also** - The Greek word for **"with"** is *meta* which in context conveys the sense of Barnabas "as colleague and fellow worker, being an equal in age and experience." (Vine)

- [See Map of Paul's Conversion and Post-Conversion events](#) - copyright Holman, do not copy

**Spurgeon** - He went up to Jerusalem lest he might be misrepresented and thought to be a teacher of some novel doctrine, and not one at heart with the rest of the brotherhood. We must be careful not to create misunderstandings by holding too much aloof from other believers.

**John Phillips** has an interesting comment on **Barnabas** - "Barnabas was a thoroughly likeable man. He was the kind of man for whom the Bible says that other men would die. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die," Paul wrote, "yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die" (Rom. 5:7). Quite possibly, he had Barnabas in mind when he wrote that verse because Barnabas was "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11:24)....Barnabas knew nothing of jealousy. He must have known that Paul would soon eclipse him, no matter what the enterprise or where the place. Spurgeon once wrote, "It takes more grace than I can tell, to play the second fiddle well." He could have been describing Barnabas. Barnabas and Paul became the first church-sent foreign missionaries of the gospel age. Together, they pioneered and suffered and triumphed in Cyprus and Galatia. The Galatians, of course, knew Barnabas as a good, godly, gracious, and gifted brother." ([Exploring Galatians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**Went up again to Jerusalem** - Why Jerusalem? Jerusalem was the hub of Christianity at that time and all the original Apostle's were there. Paul knew [Willie Sutton's law](#) to "go where the money was" (so to speak).

**Jack Arnold** explains that one of the reasons Paul went up to Jerusalem was "to demonstrate that the Gospel he was preaching to the Gentiles was the same Gospel the Apostles were preaching to the Jews." ([ref](#)) Earlier Paul had emphasized "the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man." (Gal 1:11+)

**Went up (305)** (**anabaino** from **ana** = upwards, up, as a pref. denotes up, again, back + **basis** = a foot) means to go up, to ascend, cause to ascend from a lower to a higher place. [Click for full definition at bottom of page.](#)

**A T Robertson** says of **Titus** "his very presence was a challenge to the [Judaizers](#), since he was a Greek Christian."

**Martin Luther** - Paul chose two witnesses, Barnabas and Titus. Barnabas had been Paul's preaching companion to the Gentiles. Barnabas was an eye-witness of the fact that the Holy Ghost had come upon the Gentiles in response to the simple preaching of faith in Jesus Christ. Barnabas stuck to Paul on this point, that it was not necessary for the Gentiles to be bothered with the Law as long as they believed in Christ. Titus was superintendent of the churches in Crete, having been placed in charge of the churches by Paul. Titus was a former Gentile.

**Taking...along** (aorist active participle) ([4838](#)) (**sumparalambano** from **sun/syn** = together [speaks of intimacy] + **paralambano** = to take to, to join to oneself from **para** = alongside, beside + **lambano** = to take, receive) means to take along with oneself as a companion on a journey. This is the verb used in Acts 15:37-38+ of the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas about Mark.

**W E Vine** comments that "taking along" is "one word in original, *sumparalambanō*, used elsewhere only of John Mark, Acts 12:25; 15:37, 38. Paul makes a difference (distinction) thus between **Barnabas** who went with him, and **Titus** whom he took with him. The younger man (Titus) was subordinate to the older men, an assistant and attendant, Acts 13:5, rather than a colleague." (Collected Writings)

**Sumparalambano** - 4x in 3v -

Acts 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, **taking along** with them John, who was also called Mark.

Acts 15:37 Barnabas wanted to **take** John, called Mark, **along** with them also. **38** But Paul kept insisting that they should not **take** him **along** who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

Galatians 2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

**Sumparalambano** - 2x in [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Ge 19:17, Job 1:4

Genesis 19:17 When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or **you will be swept away** (Lxx = *sumparalambano* - taken along with the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah).

## TITUS A TRUSTED AND BELOVED CO-WORKER

**Phil Newton** explains that "At the heart of the Galatian controversy was the teaching that faith alone in Christ alone was not sufficient for salvation. A Gentile convert must also be circumcised in order to be saved. The Judaizers obviously claimed that this was the authoritative Gospel taught in Jerusalem. So just in case there was a question mark about the power of the Gospel to save those who were not circumcised, Paul took **Titus** along with him to Jerusalem. Teaching circumcision for salvation was not really an issue among Jewish converts because they were already circumcised. But now this addition of Gentile converts created a problem with those Jews who had superficially embraced the Gospel. They still clung to their circumcision and obedience to the ceremonial law as part of their righteousness before God." ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Titus** - His name occurs 13x in 12v (below). You can discern a great deal about the character of the man **Titus** by scanning the following passages and this will help you understand why Paul took him to Jerusalem. As stated earlier the fact that Titus was an uncircumcised Gentile would also serve as a "test case" to validate that the Gospel message was faith in Jesus, not faith in Jesus plus anything (including circumcision).

2 Corinthians 2:13 I had no rest for my spirit, not finding **Titus** my brother (BROTHER IN CHRIST); but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 7:6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of **Titus**.... 13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of **Titus**, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.... 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before **Titus** proved to be the truth.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged **Titus** that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.... 16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of **Titus**.... 23 As for **Titus**, he is my partner (*koinonos*) and fellow worker (*sunergos*) among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the

churches, a glory to Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:18 I urged **Titus** to go, and I sent the brother with him. **Titus** did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps?

Galatians 2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking **Titus** along also.... 3 But not even **Titus**, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

2 Timothy 4:10<sup>+</sup> for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, **Titus** to Dalmatia.

**Comment:** These are Paul's last recorded words before he was martyred and we see that Titus persevered in the faith in contrast to men like Demas who deserted Paul and presumably the faith he had once professed.

Titus 1:4<sup>+</sup> To **Titus**, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you." (In short, Paul entrusted the churches in Crete to Titus!)

## TAKING TWO "SIMPATICOS"

The definition of *simpatico* means having compatible temperaments and pleasing qualities enabling the individuals to get along and show mutual understanding to one another. When you are going into what could be a "lion's den" (filled with "Judaizers!") you should consider taking along individuals who are "*simpatico*!"

**Jack Arnold** observes that "Paul took two companions with him for a definite purpose. His purpose was to test or to challenge the Apostles in Jerusalem concerning the real meaning of the gospel of grace. Paul wanted to make sure that false teaching of the Judaizers, who also had their headquarters in Jerusalem, was not rubbing off on the Apostles. One companion was **Barnabas** who was a Jew and was preaching the gospel of grace to Gentiles, as was Paul, and with great success. The other companion was **Titus**, who was an uncircumcised Gentile, converted to Christ through the gospel of grace. Paul took **Titus** to Jerusalem as a test case for the whole issue of salvation by grace apart from circumcision. With **Titus**, Paul was forcing the issue of grace to come out in the open so it could be dealt with by all the Apostles. Paul's plan was to have the Judaizers rebuked by all the Apostles for teaching false doctrine. The Judaizers taught that circumcision was necessary for a person to be saved, but **Titus** was a living example that this belief was totally false. Paul was a manipulator in a good sense, for he set up the [Judaizers](#) by bringing **Titus** as a litmus test of true salvation. Paul set up a situation which would bring confrontation so the truth of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone would refute the false teaching of salvation through the Mosaic Law. Leaders often work behind the scenes to bring about a positive conclusion in a large group. This is why leaders are often accused of manipulation. This stigma goes with being a leader. ([Sermon](#))

**Related Resources at bottom of this page:**

- [Excursus on Barnabas- Son of Encouragement](#)
- [DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO BARNABAS SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT](#)
- [BACKGROUND FOR PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS Charles Swindoll Insight for Living](#)
- [WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS? Bruce Wilkinson, Kenneth Boa](#)
- [TIMING OF PAUL'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM Phil Newton](#)
- [Theological Journal Articles that go into more detail](#)

**A SHORT EXCURSUS ON THE VALUE OF OBSERVING AND INTERROGATING WORDS LIKE "THEN"** - Let me digress for a moment in the interest of encouraging you to read the Bible inductively. Be alert to this "[time sensitive](#)" word which means subsequently or soon afterward. **Then** reveals the **timing** or **sequence** of events and answers the **5W/H** question "**When?**" And so to reiterate when used as an expression of time or "time phrase", **then** marks that which is next in order of time, soon after that, following next after in order of position, narration or enumeration; being next in a series. Observing **then** can be very useful in following the course of events in a section, especially in eschatological (prophetic) passages - e.g., in Nebuchadnezzar's dream there are several occurrences (in the NAS) - Da 2:35, Da 2:39, Da 2:40, Da 2:46, Da 2:48. Compare the uses of **then** in the Olivet Discourse - Mt 24:9, Mt 24:14, 16, 21, 23, 30 (2 uses), etc Every time you encounter a TIME PHRASE you should pause and ask "When type" questions like -- "What time is it? What happens next? Why does this happen now?, etc". Remember that the answer will often be apparent only by examining the context or surrounding passages. **Mark** expressions of time with a circle or **clock** (I use a green clock throughout my Bible and recommend [Pigma Micron pens](#) to keep from bleeding through the pages) in your Bible margin. I use Micron 01 size / .25 mm which is a fine point and excellent for marking the text. The Micron 005 creates an even finer line but the thin tip is easily bent. Several useful colors are available in a six pack of 0.20 mm (Black, Red, Blue, Green, Brown, Purple). These pens are not cheap but last for many months in my experience.

If I might, allow me to make one more "poetic plea" to emphasize the need of us all to hone our skills o**Observation** the foundation of all fruitful [Inductive Bible Study](#). Although **Rudyard Kipling** was not referring to Inductive Bible Study when he wrote his poem **Six Honest Serving-Men**, we can ponder the parallel principle poetically phrased...

I keep six honest serving-men  
(They taught me all I knew);  
Their names are **What** and **Why** and **When**  
And **How** and **Where** and **Who**.  
I send them over land and sea,  
I send them east and west;  
But after they have worked for me,  
I give them all a rest.

**Kipling** gives sound "Biblical" advice, except for his last line. Beloved, make it the goal of your life **to never "give them all a rest"** but instead daily "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15<sup>+</sup>) Most students of Scripture do not see the "gold nuggets" of truth in passages and paragraphs, because they do not know **what to look for**. One way you will learn what to look for is by **asking the right questions**. Questions will bring details to our attention.

**Galatians 2:2 It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.**

Amplified: I went because it was specially and divinely revealed to me that I should go, and I put before them the Gospel [declaring to them that] which I preach among the Gentiles. However, [I presented the matter] privately before those of repute. [for I wanted to make certain, by thus at first confining my communication to this private conference] that I was not running or had not run in vain [guarding against being discredited either in what I was planning to do or had already done].

Phillips My visit on this occasion was by divine command, and I gave a full exposition of the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. I did this first in private conference with the church leaders, to make sure that what I had done and proposed doing was acceptable to them.

Wuest - And I went up in accordance with a revelation. And I laid before them for their consideration, the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles, but privately to those of recognized eminence, lest by any means I should be running or had run in vain. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET I went there because of a revelation and presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did so only in a private meeting with the influential people, to make sure that I was not running-- or had not run-- in vain.

NLT I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I met privately with those considered to be leaders of the church and shared with them the message I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure that we were in agreement, for fear that all my efforts had been wasted and I was running the race for nothing.

GNT Galatians 2:2 ν βην δ κατ αποκλυψιν· κα νεθ μην α το ς ε αγγ λιον κηρ σσω ν το ς θνεσιν, κατ δ αν δ το ς δοκο σιν, μ πως ε ς κεν ν τρ χω δραμον.

Greek transliterated: anebēn (AAI) de kata (according to) apokalypsin kai anethēmēn (AMI) autois to euangelion ho kēryssō (PAI) en (among) tois ethnesin kat' idian de (moreover) tois dokousin (PAP) mē (lest) pōs (hardly) eis kenon trechō (PAS = I should be running) ē edramon (AAI - have run).

KJV Galatians 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

ESV Galatians 2:2 I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.

ASV Galatians 2:2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

CSB Galatians 2:2 I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles-- but privately to those recognized as leaders-- so that I might not be running, or have run the race, in vain.

NIV Galatians 2:2 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.

NKJ Galatians 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

NRS Galatians 2:2 I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain.

YLT Galatians 2:2 and I went up by revelation, and did submit to them the good news that I preach among the nations, and privately to those esteemed, lest in vain I might run or did run;

NAB Galatians 2:2 I went up in accord with a revelation, and I presented to them the gospel that I preach to the Gentiles-- but privately to those of repute-- so that I might not be running, or have run, in vain.

NJB Galatians 2:2 My journey was inspired by a revelation and there, in a private session with the recognised leaders, I expounded the whole gospel that I preach to the gentiles, to make quite sure that the efforts I was making and had already made should not be fruitless.

GWN Galatians 2:2 I went in response to a revelation from God. I showed them the way I spread the Good News among people who are not Jewish. I did this in a private meeting with those recognized as important people to see whether all my efforts had been wasted.

BBE Galatians 2:2 And I went up by revelation; and I put before them the good news which I was preaching among the Gentiles, but privately before those who were of good name, so that the work which I was or had been doing might not be without effect.

- It was because of a revelation that I went up Ac 16:9,10 18:9 23:11
- and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles Ga 2:9 1:16 Ac 15:4,12 1Co 1:23 2:2
- I did so in private to those who were of reputation Ga 2:6,9 Ec 10:1 Ac 5:34 Php 2:29
- for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain Mt 10:16 1Co 9:26 Php 2:16 1Th 3:5
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL'S MISSION: A DIVINE REVELATION

**It was because of a revelation that I went up - Amplified** - "I went because it was specially and divinely revealed to me that I should go." Paul did not go to Jerusalem because he was summoned by men or sent by men but because of a divine revelation (cp Acts 9:3-6+, Acts 22:17-18+). We see a similar testimony by Paul in Gal 1:12+ explaining "I neither received it (THE GOSPEL) from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a **revelation** of Jesus Christ."

**Hansen** - Acts reports that Paul received guidance by **revelation** in several different ways: through prophets (Acts 11:28; Acts 21:10-11), by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2; Acts 16:6-7; Acts 20:22-23; Acts 21:4), in dream visions (Acts 16:9; Acts 18:9-10; Acts 23:11; Acts 27:23-24) and in ecstatic trances (Acts 22:17-21; see also 2 Cor 12:2-4). ([IVP Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Donald Campbell** adds that Paul "went because God directed him to, not because the Jerusalem leaders had summoned him or called him "on the carpet" for preaching to the Gentiles." [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#)

If this visit refers to Paul's THIRD visit to Jerusalem to attend the "Jerusalem Council," it is another evidence that our Omniscient God knew that the early church was in imminent danger of perverting the Gospel by adding works to faith. And so in a sense "in the fullness of time", at the right time, God called on His "man Friday" to go and give a defense of the Gospel of grace to counter "another gospel" that was really not a Gospel at all (Gal 1:7+). God's timing is always perfect!

**MacArthur** feels that Paul emphasizes "the divine commissioning of his visit in order to refute any suggestion by the **Judaizers** that they had sent Paul to Jerusalem to have the apostles correct his doctrine.....During the previous seventeen years he had preached the Gospel without any human instruction, his message having been given to him entirely by God's direct revelation (Gal. 1:11–12, 16–17)." ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**John Phillips** adds that Paul "had certainly not gone, cap in hand, to seek some kind of authorization for his ministry from the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem. He had gone to force the issue and to fight for Gentile independence from Judaism and the Mosaic Law." ([Exploring Galatians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**Revelation** (602) ([apokalupsis](#) from **apó** = from + **kalúpto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse) literally means cover from and so the idea is to remove that which conceals something. **Apokalupsis** conveys the idea of "taking the lid off" and means to remove the cover and expose to open view that which was heretofore not visible, known or disclosed. It means to make manifest or reveal a thing previously secret or unknown. It describes removing of a veil (an unveiling) or covering thus exposing to open view what was concealed. In all its uses, **revelation** refers to something or someone, once hidden, becoming visible and now made fully known.

**George Duncan** - When Paul adds, by way of parenthesis, that this visit was paid [Gal 2:2a] in consequence of a revelation which had come to him, he wants to make it clear that no mere personal motive lay behind the visit. If he did see the Jerusalem 'authorities' and confer with them, it was not to seek any ruling from them that he went. Revelations meant much in the life of the apostle (cf. 2 Cor. 12:1)—not merely as mystical experiences but as indications of the divine will. Acts shows how many of the great decisions of his missionary career were taken as the result of divine 'guidance' (e.g. Acts 13:2; 16:6, 7; 20:22). In particular we may recall that on his previous visit to Jerusalem he had received a revelation to quit the Holy City, for his witness would not be received there and his destined work was among the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21); and it was therefore natural that he should not wish to return until another revelation authorized him to do so. (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton 1934).

**Went up** (305) see preceding discussion of [anabaino](#). When one goes to Jerusalem (on a hill) the NT almost always says "went up" or "go up." If you have ever been to Jerusalem you remember ascending that winding road up to the Holy City of God.

**And I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles - TDNT** says the verb submitted in this context means Paul expounding the Gospel to them "with the request for counsel, approval or decision." The point is that he did not go to find out what to preach or to be corrected. He knew he had the truth of the Gospel "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12+) and sought their affirmation that it was the same Gospel which they had been preaching in Jerusalem and beyond.

**Martin Luther** - "The believing Jews, however, could not get it through their heads that circumcision was not necessary for salvation. They were encouraged in their wrong attitude by the false apostles. The result was that the people were up in arms against Paul and his doctrine." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Submitted** (aorist middle indicative) (394) ([anatithemi](#) from **ana** = up, again, back + **histemi** = to place, put or lay) is a verb which literally means to set up or lay up (literal sense in Lxx of 2 Sa 6:17 = "set it in its place") or to set apart (this sense in Lxx of Lev 27:28 = "anything which a man sets apart [dedicates] to the LORD"). **Anatithemi** is only used in the middle voice in the NT and means to set forth or lay a matter before someone for their consideration or to communicate with a view to consultation. **Anatithemi** is the root of the noun **anathema** (334) which refers to a consecrated gift hung up or laid up in a temple (Luke 21:5+) **Friberg** - (1) as setting forth one's cause declare, refer to (for counsel) (Acts 25:14+); (2) as giving additional information with a request for consideration explain, communicate, put before (Gal 2.2) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#)) **TDNT** - "to set forth, impart or communicate one's cause" (At 25:14+); "to expound with the request for counsel, approval or decision" (Gal 2:2). The only other NT use of **anatithemi** is in Acts 25:14+ where Luke records "While they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix." There are 6 uses of **anatithemi** in the Septuagint - Lev. 27:28, 29; 1 Sa 31:10; 2 Sa 6:17; Mic. 4:13; 7:5

Paul used the related longer form (**prosanatithemi** - to lay any matter before others with a view to obtaining advice or instruction) of this verb in Gal 1:12+ emphasizing that he "did not immediately **consult** with flesh and blood."

**Phil Newton** - To make such a submission implies that Paul laid the gospel before them for their consideration. It may have been that he had capsuled his gospel in writing and presented it to them. But more than likely, he outlined verbally to the key apostles the contents of the gospel which he preached. I do not think we should get the idea that Paul went in with fear and trembling. He was quite confident in the gospel which he preached, for he "received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul was not concerned about his gospel preaching as much as he was concerned about what was being preached in Jerusalem! He wanted to make sure that they were "running" together in gospel proclamation. He viewed their task as a race in which they were moving forward in declaring the message of the Kingdom. ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Gospel** (2098) ([euaggelion](#) from **eu** = good + **aggéllō** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In modern secular use **Gospel** has an interesting meaning of something accepted as infallible truth or as a guiding principle (e.g., such and such is "the Gospel truth"). This is not a bad Biblical definition either and one for which Paul is writing to Galatians.

**Newton** adds that "The message of the gospel centers on what God has done in Jesus Christ to deliver sinners from the justice of divine wrath. It points to a holy, sovereign God and sinful, depraved humanity that exists completely at enmity with God. Then God came to man in the Incarnation. He took on humanity, fulfilled the Law on behalf of sinners so that sinners might receive the imputation of His righteousness for their standing with God. And more so, Jesus Christ satisfied all of the righteous demands of God toward sinners, bearing His own wrath in His body upon the cross, so that the enmity between us and God might be removed; that we might be reconciled to God, being made heirs forever. He rose from the dead and unites us with Him in resurrection power, with the promise that one day we will be raised eternally with Him. We

receive all that Christ accomplished through faith alone in Him and His finished work. Nothing can be added to this, nor is anything necessary, for Jesus Christ finished all that God demanded for our eternal salvation. Neither circumcision, nor baptism, nor church membership, nor observance of the sacraments, nor adherence to the Law can add one drop of righteousness to our standing with God. For in Jesus Christ, our standing is complete! Through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone we are justified before God. **We can disagree about many things within the local church and within the broader scope of Christian churches. But we have no room to disagree on the gospel. That was the essence of what Paul was addressing in Jerusalem.** There are plenty of wonderful brethren with whom we cannot dot the same 'i's' and cross the same 't's' on non-essential areas of teaching. But we stand together on the gospel! My great concern is for those who call themselves evangelical Christians and gospel preachers, yet they convolute the gospel of Jesus Christ. When they substitute some outward movement for faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning death, then they convolute the gospel. When they claim that praying a particular prayer will save you, they have failed to leave a person with the sufficiency of the cross of Christ to remove our enmity with God. When they claim that your trip down a church aisle at their beckoning is what you need to do to be saved, then they have detracted from the sufficiency of the gospel and its power to save. When we examine the methods that have confused the message of the gospel in our day, we find much of what professes to be the gospel lacking the very gospel it professes! Let us not hesitate to examine the message we speak or hear, lest the cross of Christ and the necessity of faith alone be pushed aside for showy manipulation of carnal minds. ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Preach** (2784) ([kerusso](#) from [kerux/keryx](#) = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes [kerugma](#) = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16)! **Wuest** adds that **preach** in the [present tense](#) emphasizes "that Paul was still (CONTINUALLY) preaching grace." ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** agrees that this refers to the Gospel which he had always preached among the Gentiles, "the gospel of salvation by God's sovereign grace through man's penitent faith—a gospel utterly contrary to the works-righteous belief of the [Judaizers](#) that "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1)." ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**A T Robertson** comments that "The decision reached by this group (**OF REPUTATION**) would shape the decision of the public conference in the adjourned meeting (HE IS REFERRING TO THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL - Acts 15:1-29+)....It was of the utmost importance that they should see eye to eye. The [Judaizers](#) were assuming that the twelve apostles and James the Lord's brother would side with them against Paul and Barnabas."

**But I did so in private to those who were of reputation- Phillips'** paraphrase - "I did this first in private conference with the church leaders" "The general communication to the Jerusalem Christians was accompanied by a private consultation with the leaders. Not that a different subject was discussed in private, but that the discussion was deeper and more detailed than would have befitted the whole body of Christians." (Marvin Vincent)

**Phillips** comments that "Paul's first concern, upon arriving in Jerusalem, had been to secure a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders of the Jerusalem church. This was simple common sense. It is far easier to arrive at a consensus when a few fair-minded and intelligent people sit down together to discuss an issue than it is to carry the day with a crowd. Paul, Barnabas, Peter, John, and James, the Lord's brother, in conference together, could pray, meditate, wait upon the Holy Spirit, reason, discuss, disagree, and seek calmly and rationally to find common ground." ([Exploring Galatians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**Those who were of reputation** - That is, the Jewish leaders who were well thought of (see [Wuest's](#) note below) and he names three - Cephas, John and James, the Lord's brother (the other James has been martyred by Herod Acts 12:1f+).

**Wuest** explains that this phrase **were of reputation** is the verb **"dokeo** which in its intransitive use means, "to seem, to be accounted, reputed." Thus the phrase could be rendered, *"to those who were reputed"* men of recognized position such as James, Peter, and John. The idea is *"to men of eminence"* We have the idea repeated in Gal 2:6 and Gal 2:9, in the phrases *"those who were of high reputation"* and *"who were reputed to be pillars."* ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**Vincent on were of reputation** - Paul recognises the honorable position of the three and their rightful claim to respect ([Galatians 2 Commentary - Greek Word Studies](#))

The preacher of the gospel is pictured as a runner of a race concerned about his eventual success or failure in the race

**For fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.- Amplified** - "I wanted to make certain, by thus at first confining my communication to this private conference] that I was not running or had not run in vain [guarding against being discredited either in what I was planning to do or had already done]." This athletic metaphor of a stadium foot race is a reference to Paul's missionary efforts among the Gentiles and reminds us of Paul's last words "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course (RACE), I have kept the faith;" (2 Ti 4:7+).

**Jack Arnold** - Why did Paul fear running in vain? He preached doing away with circumcision, and Jews and Gentiles had to approach God on the same basis—by faith in Christ. If the apostles did not accept his Gospel, there would be a separation in the church, making a Gentile and Jewish church, and unity would be impossible. He did not fear his Gospel preaching was in vain, but feared his work of bringing the two groups together would be in vain. ([Sermon](#))

**Campbell** explains **had run in vain** - "If the Jerusalem leaders insisted on circumcision and other requirements of the Law for Gentile converts, Paul's labor (running) among the Gentiles **was in vain**. It was not that the apostle had any doubts or misgivings about the gospel he had preached for 14 years (Gal. 2:1), but that he feared that his past and present ministry might be hindered or rendered of no effect by the [Judaizers](#)." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Phil Newton on had run in vain** - What Paul meant was not that he had failed to understand the gospel or had possibly preached the wrong gospel. But instead, in the joint race of gospel ministry, he might have found himself alone, with all of the others getting side-tracked by changing the gospel message. He might have found his fruit, the Galatian converts and others, being led away by the [Judaizers](#) for a false gospel. If the heart of the early church, the Jerusalem Christians, could not support his gospel preaching, then the [Judaizers](#) would have just what they needed to divert these young converts into their false teaching. **So Paul submits the gospel to the leading apostles for their evaluation and for their confirmation, so that they might be running together in the unity of the gospel...**We may have the same tag with them but we do not have unity with them apart from the gospel. This is why it is a futile effort on the part of some evangelicals to be united with the Roman Catholic Church. A number of leading evangelicals persist in trying to find some common ground for unity with Catholics. But unless we can agree on the gospel, we have no ground for unity. **John Armstrong** put it like this: *The problem is not that there are no true believers within the Roman Catholic Church. That has never been the debate. God is the final judge of who, whether Roman Catholic or evangelical, is genuinely trusting Christ alone for salvation. The problem is that those who affirm the theological beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church do not have a Gospel that is biblical. We must share the Gospel with lost evangelicals but we must make sure it is the Gospel that we are preaching to them, not the gospel of Rome, which is no gospel at all* ([Viewpoint, Jan.-Feb., 1998, vol. 2, no. 1, ¶](#)) ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Hendriksen on ruin in vain** - If, while Paul was preaching the gospel of justification by faith, without the works of the law, the other apostles, though in principle agreeing with him, would have been "soft" in their attitude toward those who seriously questioned the rightness of his convictions and of his preaching, the cause of mission work among the Gentiles would have been seriously undermined. The effectiveness of that which Paul had been doing in the past and was still doing would have been decisively weakened.

**Luther** adds - Not that Paul himself ever thought he had run in vain. However, many did think that Paul had preached the Gospel in vain, because he kept the Gentiles free from the yoke of the Law. The opinion that obedience to the Law was mandatory unto salvation was gaining ground. Paul meant to remedy this evil. By this conference he hoped to establish the identity of his Gospel with that of the other apostles, to stop the talk of his opponents that he had been running around in vain.

**Wiersbe** adds that "Had Paul been unwilling to wage this spiritual warfare, the church in the first century might have become only a Jewish sect, preaching a mixture of Law and grace. But because of Paul's courage, the Gospel was kept free from legalism, and it was carried to the Gentiles with great blessing. (adding that "had run in vain") "does not mean that Paul was unsure either of his message or his ministry...What he was concerned about was the future of the Gospel among the Gentiles, because this was his specific ministry from Christ. If the "pillars" (Gal 2:9) sided with the [Judaizers](#), or tried to compromise, then Paul's ministry would be in jeopardy. He wanted to get their approval before he faced the whole assembly; otherwise a three-way division could result." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Compare other allusions by Paul to running or laboring in vain:**

- 1 Corinthians 9:26+ Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;
- Philippians 2:16+ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5+ For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

**Peter Kennedy - The Race - Galatians 2:2**

When Herb Elliott was sixteen he had run the mile in four minutes, twenty-two seconds. Coach Percy Cerutti saw Elliott run and told him he could help him to knock off a half a minute. "Son," Cerutti said, "do you know what it takes to run a mile under four minutes? Do you know what it is to run until you can hardly stand up, to suck in hot air until you're almost unconscious? Do you know what it is to run that kind of race?" Elliott responded, "I don't care what it takes; I want to run the mile under four minutes."

In less than eighteen months of training, Herb Elliott ran his first sub-four-minute mile and in the same year he set a new world record for the mile and the 1,500 meters. In a period of twelve days in 1958 Elliott ran three 1,500-meter races and two sub-four-minute miles.

It is 1960; Rome, Italy; the Olympic Games; the 1,500 meter race: Elliott falls in behind the leaders. At 1,000 meters he moves easily in front of the pack. At the backstretch, Elliott sees Cerutti in the stands waving a white towel. This is the signal that Elliott is on course for a new world record. Elliott responds with a burst of speed and finishes with a world record of 3:35.6.

Do you respond to Christ as you run the race? Today in prayer give thanks that Christ Jesus gives you the grace to run your course and finish the race.

"The gospel preached by Paul in the early years was the gospel still being preached by him years later."—James Montgomery Boice - From Generation to Generation

**Judaizers** - Those who adopted Jewish religious practices or sought to influence others to do so. The Greek verb [Judaizo](#) [ Esther 8:17] and once in the New Testament (Galatians 2:14). In the Septuagint this verb is used in relation to the Gentiles in Persia who adopted Jewish practices in order to avoid the consequences of Esther's decree (Esther 8:13 ), which permitted Jews to avenge the wrongs committed against them. The Septuagint not only uses [Judaizo](#) to translate the Hebrew *miyahadim* ("to become a Jew"), but adds that these Gentiles were circumcised.

In Galatians 2:14 [Judaizo](#) means to "live like Jews" (RSV, neb, NASB, Phillips), "follow Jewish customs" ( *NIV* ), or "live by the Jewish law" (Barclay). The context for this reference is the episode in Antioch when Paul condemns Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentile Christians. Peter's actions are viewed by Paul as a serious compromise of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone, lending support to the position that sought to impose Jewish ceremonial law on the Gentiles. Thus, Paul interprets Peter's withdrawal in terms of its effect in compelling Gentile Christians to live like Jews.

The term "**Judaizer**" has come to be used in theological parlance to describe the opponents of Paul and Barnabas at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) and those who sought to preach "another gospel" in the churches of Galatia (Galatians 2:4,12; Gal 6:12+; cf. Philippians 3:2). In this sense, "**Judaizers**" refers to Jewish Christians who sought to induce Gentiles to observe Jewish religious customs: to **Judaize**." It appears that these individuals agreed with much of the apostolic [kerygma](#) but sought to regulate the admission of Gentiles into the covenant people of God through circumcision and the keeping of the ceremonial law. Insisting that "Unless you are circumcised ... you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1+), these "believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees" (Acts 15:5) posed a serious threat to the gospel of grace and the universality of the Christian mission.

Paul's Galatian epistle portrays the Judaizers as having come from the Jerusalem church to his churches in Galatia, stressing the need for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the law, both for full acceptance by God (legalism) and as the basis for Christian living (*nomism* [ Galatians 6:12-13+). Amidst the rising pressures of Jewish nationalism in Palestine during the mid-first century, and increased Zealot animosity against any Jew who had Gentile sympathies, it would appear that these Jewish Christians embarked on a Judaizing mission among Paul's converts in order to prevent Zealot persecution of the Palestinian church. ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)) (bold added)

**Judaizers—Legalists:** these were Jews who professed Christ but still hung on to their Judaistic religion, in particular to the rite of circumcision and to the law of Moses (see Acts 5:1–35, esp. Acts 5:1, 24–29). They believed a man became a Christian (1) by first becoming a Jew. The man was to embrace Judaism with all its rituals and ceremonies and be circumcised, and begin to obey the laws of Moses (2) then the man could accept Christ as his Savior. **In the mind of the circumcised, Christianity was a mixture of Judaism and the teachings of Christ.** The law was just as important as Christ and Christ was no more important than the law. They failed to grasp (1) that Christ was the fulfillment of the law (**Ed:** Mt 5:17± = "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Ro 10:4± = "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."), (2) that Christ had kept the law perfectly, thereby becoming the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern of what every man should be, (3) that Christ was not only the embodiment of the law, but so much more—the very embodiment of God Himself, the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern to whom all men were to look for their salvation and standard (4) that Christ, as the Son of God, as the Ideal Man, and as the Perfect Pattern, was the One to whom all men were now to look and obey. Some Jews were impressed with Christ and professed Him, but they were never able to understand or else were unwilling to accept Christ as the fulfillment of the law and as the Savior of all men. Therefore, they never turned to Christ alone, never broke away from their legalistic religion or from requiring men (Gentiles) to become Jews before they could become Christians. ([POSB Galatians](#))

**Phillip Ryken** adds - These men are sometimes called "**the Judaizers**" because they confused Judaism with Christianity. They taught that Gentiles had to become Jews in order to become Christians. Their slogan was, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1+). Since they opposed Paul's law-free gospel, one might call them **the Torah police**." But Paul knew them for what they really were: "**false brothers**" (Gal. 2:4)—"**brothers**" because they claimed to be Christians, but "**false**" because they did not follow Christ after all. ([Reformed Expository Commentary – Galatians](#)) (Bold added)

**Gotquestions on Who Were the Judaizers?** - There have always been those who balk at the idea of God's salvation being offered freely to those who believe. They reason that such a grand gift as forgiveness from such a holy God must require some kind of payment from us. We thank God for His grace, but we understand that He expects us to somehow earn that grace—in other words, there must be something that we can do to pay off the debt we owe to God. In the early church, those who taught a combination of God's grace and human effort were called "Judaizers." The word **Judaizer** comes from a Greek verb meaning "to live according to Jewish customs." The word appears in Galatians 2:14± where Paul describes how he confronted Peter for forcing Gentile Christians to **Judaize**." A Judaizer taught that, in order for a Christian to truly be right with God, **he must conform to the Mosaic Law. Circumcision**, especially, was promoted as necessary for salvation. Gentiles had to become Jewish proselytes first, and then they could come to Christ. The doctrine of the Judaizers was a mixture of grace (through Christ) and works (through the keeping of the Law). This false doctrine was dealt with in Acts 15 and strongly condemned in the book of Galatians. (for full article see [Who were the Judaizers?](#)) (Bold added)

**Related Resources:**

- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Judaizing](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Judaizing Christians](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Judaizing Christians](#) [Semi Judaizers](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Judaizers](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Judaizers](#)
- [Who were the Judaizers?](#)
- [Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?](#)
- [What is the Sacred Name Movement?](#)
- [What was the meaning and importance of the Jerusalem Council \(Acts 15\)?](#)
- [Christian liberty – what does the Bible say?](#)

**Galatians 2:3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**

Greek: all' oude (not even) Titos ho syn emoi Hellēn ōn (V-PPA-NMS) ēnagkasthē (V-AIP-3S) [e] peritmethēnai (V-ANP)

Amplified: But [all went well!] even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled [as some had anticipated] to be circumcised, although he was a Greek.

Phillips Not one of them intimated that Titus, because he was a Greek, ought to be circumcised.

NET Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, although he was a Greek.

GNT Galatians 2:3 ἄλλ' οὐδ' ἰσοῦς ὁ μετ' ἐμοῦ, Ἕλληνας, ἀναγκάσθη περιτεμεῖσθαι·

NLT Galatians 2:3 And they supported me and did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile.

KJV Galatians 2:3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

ESV Galatians 2:3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

ASV Galatians 2:3 But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

CSB Galatians 2:3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

NIV Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

NKJ Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

NRS Galatians 2:3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

YLT Galatians 2:3 but not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised --

NAB Galatians 2:3 Moreover, not even Titus, who was with me, although he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised,

NJB Galatians 2:3 Even then, and although Titus, a Greek, was with me, there was no demand that he should be circumcised;

GWN Galatians 2:3 Titus was with me, and although he is Greek, no one forced him to be circumcised.

BBE Galatians 2:3 But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was made to undergo circumcision:

- Ga 5:2-6 Ac 15:24 16:3 1Co 9:20,21
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## FOR FREEDOM FROM THE LAW

**But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised**- Paul knew that one of the key false teachings of the **Judaizers'**works based system was the necessity that anyone who believed in Jesus must also be circumcised. And so Titus was the perfect **test case** for he had believed in Jesus and being a **Greek** had not undergone circumcision. Paul reasoned that if some (possibly some of the sect of the Pharisees who felt it was necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and to observe the Law of Moses - Acts 15:5) **compelled Titus** to be circumcised, then other Gentile believers would have to be circumcised to be in accord with this false teaching, which would be in effect be **"another gospel"** (Gal 1:6, [7+](#)) which he has stated warranted their being accursed (Gal 1:8+). On the other hand if **Titus** were not **compelled** to be circumcised, then **freedom from the law was confirmed** Notice that "compel" is used again in Gal 2:14+ in Paul's confrontation of Cephas (Peter) declaring "how can you try to **force** the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (NET).

**Swindoll** explains "The point is that even in the center of Judaism, in the presence of the original Jewish followers of Jesus, surrounded by the most Law-loving Jews in the world, nobody compelled Gentile believers to be circumcised. What sense would it make, then, for the Judaizers to insist on enforcing the rite of circumcision for Gentile believers living in the remote regions of Galatia?" ([Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**Bartlett** says: We need to get the full force of this waiving of circumcision in the case of Titus. Paul was not against circumcision as such. He even permitted Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16:3) because his mother was a Jewess. But to insist upon Jewish usages for Gentile converts would be to make them essential parts of Christianity. And this Paul would not, and could not, do. The non-circumcision of Titus was really a decision in favor of Gentile freedom from the yoke of Judaism.

One of the urgent challenges that incited Paul to write Galatians was that Judaizers in Galatia were compelling the Galatians to be circumcised as he describes in chapter 6 where **compel...to be circumcised** is the very same phrase as in herer in Galatian 2:3.

Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh **try to compel** (anagkazo) **you to be circumcised** ([peritemno](#)), simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. (Gal 6:12+)

**Compelled** ([315](#)) (anagkazo from [anagke](#) - compelling need requiring immediate action) refers to an inner or outer compulsion for someone to act in a certain manner (Gal 2:3, 14, 6:12, Acts 26:11), and to do so with a sense of urgency (as a pressing necessity). **Anagkazo** conveys the idea of to urge strongly in Mt 14:23. It conveys the idea of an inward feeling of obligation in Acts 28:19. This word was used in surgery of force to reduce dislocations, etc. (Liddell-Scott).

**Thayer** on **anagkazo** - to necessitate, compel, drive to, constrain, whether by force, threats, etc., or by persuasion, entreaties, etc., or by other means

**Friberg** on **anagkazo** - (1) of compulsion outwardly compel, force (Acts 26.11); of friendly pressure (strongly) urge, constrain (MT 14.22); (2) passive, of compulsion inwardly feel obliged to, feel compelled (Acts 28.19) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

In English **compel** means to force or oblige someone to be or do something

**Anagkazo** - 9x in 9v - translated - compel(3), compelled(2), force(1), forced(1), made(2).

Matthew 14:22 Immediately He **made** the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus **made** His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.

Luke 14:23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and **compel** them to come in, so that my house may be filled.

Acts 26:11 "And as I (Saul prior to his conversion) punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to **force** them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

Acts 28:19 "But when the Jews objected, I was **forced** to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

2 Corinthians 12:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves **compelled** me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.

Galatians 2:3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was **compelled** to be circumcised.

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you **compel** the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Galatians 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to **compel** you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

**Anagkazo** in the OT is used only once in the Septuagint and 19x in the **Apocrypha** - 1 Esdras 3:24; 4:6; Judith 8:30; 1 Macc. 2:25; 2 Macc. 6:1, 7, 18; 7:1; 8:24; 11:11, 14; 4 Macc. 4:26; 5:2, 27; 8:2, 9; 15:7; 18:5; Bel 1:30.

Pr 6:7 Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, (LXE = For whereas he has no husbandry, nor **any one to compel him**, and is under no master)

**Phil Newton** makes an interesting point on the desire of the Judaizers to have Gentile converts circumcised - "Teaching **circumcision** for salvation was an issue among Jewish converts because they were already circumcised. But the addition of Gentile converts created a problem with those Jews who had **superficially** embraced the Gospel. They still clung to their circumcision and obedience to the ceremonial law as part of their righteousness before God...Paul explains that being **Jews by nature** meant that circumcision was part of the national heritage (Gal 2:15+). It was a sign of their covenant relationship with God initiated with Abraham. Over time, the Jews became over-reliant upon circumcision and the sacrificial system to the neglect of weightier matters. They had faced persecution and even death for practicing circumcision during the reign of the brutal Antiochus IV (175-163 BC). For the price paid, the practice of circumcision was elevated in the eyes of the Jews. It was considered an indispensable part of their identity with the covenant community and the worship of the Lord God [cf. [George, 142-145 for excellent treatment on circumcision](#)]. ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**To be circumcised** ([4059](#)) ([peritemno](#) from [peri](#) = around + [témno](#) = cut off - see study of [peritome](#)) means literally to cut something off or away ("to cut off around"), signifying a removal of that which has been cut away.

While belief in Jesus does not require **physical circumcision**, it is associated with **figurative circumcision** in both the Old and New Testaments. For example in Col 2:11-12+ Paul using the well known procedure of circumcision to describe **spiritual** circumcision ("**without hands**") that is wrought by the Spirit and results in spiritual rebirth. We see a similar use in Romans 2:24-29+, where Paul addressed the Jews (his primary audience in Romans 2) who possessed the Law of Moses and who had undergone physical circumcision and yet were still considered "**uncircumcised**" because they had not been **spiritually circumcised** "of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter (law)." (Ro 2:29+) Spiritual circumcision should have been something with which Jews were familiar for it is repeatedly alluded to in the Old Testament - Deut 10:16 could not have been more clearly stated! Deut 30:6+, cf Jer 4:4, Jer 9:26, Ezek 44:7, 9

**Spurgeon** on **circumcision** in Deut 30:6 - HERE we read of the **true circumcision**. Note the author of it: "The Lord thy God." He alone can deal effectually with our hearts and take away their carnality and pollution. To make us love God with all our hearts and souls is a miracle of grace which only the Holy Ghost can work. We must look to the Lord alone for this and never be satisfied with anything short of it. Note where this circumcision is wrought: it is not of the flesh, but of the spirit. It is the essential mark of the covenant of grace. Love to God is the indelible token of the chosen seed; by this secret seal, the election of grace is certified to the believer. We must see to it that we trust in no outward ritual, but are sealed in heart by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Note what the result is: "that thou mayest live." To be carnally minded is death. In the overcoming of the flesh we find life and peace. If we mind the things of the Spirit, we shall live. Oh, that Jehovah, our God, may complete His gracious work upon our inner natures, that in the fullest and highest sense we may live unto the Lord.

**Related Resource:**

- In depth discussion of the Spiritual Circumcision = [Circumcision of the Heart](#)

**Galatians 2:4** But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.

Greek: dia de tous pareisaktous pseudadelphous, hoitines pareiselthon (3PAAI) kataskopēsai (AAN) ten eleutherian hemon en echomen (1PPAI) en Christo Iesou, hina hemas katadoulosousin (3PFAI)

Amplified: [My precaution was] because of false brethren who had been secretly smuggled in [to the Christian brotherhood]; they had slipped in to spy on our liberty and the freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might again bring us into bondage [under the Law of Moses].

Phillips In fact, the suggestion would never have arisen but for the presence of some pseudo-Christians, who wormed their way into our meeting to spy on the liberty we enjoy in Jesus Christ, and then attempted to tie us up with rules and regulations.

Wuest: Now it was because of the false brethren who had been surreptitiously brought in, those of such a character that they sneaked in for the purpose of spying out our liberty which we are having in Christ Jesus, with the expectation of reducing us to abject slavery. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:4 Now this matter arose because of the false brothers with false pretenses who slipped in unnoticed to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, to make us slaves.

GNT Galatians 2:4 δι' ὃ τοὺς παρεισκοῦς ψευδοῦς ἀφροῦς, οἱ πνεὺς παρεισλθόν κατασκοπεύσαντες τὴνλευθερίαν μὴ ἔχοντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα μὴ καταδουλοῦσιν,

NLT Galatians 2:4 Even that question came up only because of some so-called Christians there-- false ones, really-- who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations.

KJV Galatians 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

ESV Galatians 2:4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in-- who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery--

ASV Galatians 2:4 and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

CSB Galatians 2:4 This issue arose because of false brothers smuggled in, who came in secretly to spy on the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us.

NIV Galatians 2:4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

NKJ Galatians 2:4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

NRS Galatians 2:4 But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us--

YLT Galatians 2:4 and that because of the false brethren brought in unawares, who did come in privily to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that us they might bring under bondage,

NAB Galatians 2:4 but because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, that they might enslave us--

NJB Galatians 2:4 but because of some false brothers who had secretly insinuated themselves to spy on the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, intending to reduce us to slavery--

GWN Galatians 2:4 False Christians were brought in. They slipped in as spies to learn about the freedom Christ Jesus gives us. They hoped to find a way to control us.

BBE Galatians 2:4 And that because of the false brothers let in secretly, who came searching out our free condition which we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might make servants of us;

- **But it was because of the false brethren:** Ga 5:10,12 Ac 15:1,24 20:30 2Co 11:13,17,26 1Jn 4:1
- **secretly brought in who had sneaked in:** 2Ti 3:6 2Pe 2:1,2 Jude 1:4
- **to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus:** Ga 3:23-26 5:1,13 Ps 51:12 119:45 Joh 8:31-36 2Co 3:17 1Pe 2:16 2Pe 2:19
- **n order to bring us into bondage:** Ga 4:3,9,10,25 Isa 51:23 2Co 11:20
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SPURIOUS SAINTS SNEAK IN AND SPY OUT OUR FREEDOM

**But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in - Amplified** - "[My precaution was] because of false brethren who had been secretly smuggled in [to the Christian brotherhood]" **The New English Bible** has "sham Christians"; **Phillips** paraphrase has "pseudo-Christians." **NLT** has "some so-called Christians." **God's Word Translation** has "False Christians." They were "professors" who claimed allegiance to Christ, but who demanded circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law for salvation.

**MacArthur** rightly reminds us that "Satan, as always, was the primary instigator of the subterfuge. The Judaizers were first of all the devil's agents, whatever their human associations and loyalties." [MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#)

**Donald Campbell** - No doubt these were Judaizers, whose chief slogan is found in Acts 15:1: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." These "false brothers" ("sham Christians," NEB) were like spies or fifthcolumn agents who penetrated to search out weak areas of enemy positions. (BKC)

**Boice** has an interesting comment on this passage - Paul's references to the **false brothers** in Gal 2:4 entail a military metaphor, used to indicate the subversive and militant nature of the evil that Paul was fighting. The term "**false brothers**" (pseudadelphos) is used only twice in the NT (here and in 2 Cor 11:26). In each case Paul uses the term of those who are not in fact Christians, though pretending to be so. The overtone is that of a traitor or spy. "Infiltrated" (pareisaktous) is used in the same way, as in 2 Peter 2:1, where we are told of those who will "secretly introduce" destructive heresies to weaken and ruin the church. In the LXX reading of 2 Samuel 10:3, "spy" (kataskopeō) is used of the servants of David who, according to his enemies, had come "to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it." Similarly, Paul speaks of the desire of the legalizers "to make us slaves" (katadouloúsousin), in the manner of those who would take a city by stealth or force in order to place the inhabitants in chains. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Swindoll** adds this comment on the words Paul uses in this passage - "'**Secretly**' . . . '**sneaked**' . . . '**spy**' . . . '**bondage**.'" Paul saw himself in the midst of a life-and-death battle, striving to protect a priceless treasure: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Judaizing spies whose loyalty remained with the old Law of Judaism were merely playing the part of followers of Christ, having infiltrated the ranks of the church in order to destroy the doctrine of grace from the inside out. And the best way to destroy grace is to enslave believers with a strenuous religious system including prerequisites for meriting salvation; rituals to receive salvation; and righteous works to maintain salvation." ([Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**False brethren** (5569)(pseudadelphos from **pseudes** = false + **adelphós** = brother) refers to those who pretend to be a believers ostentatiously professing belief in Jesus but destitute of the authenticating down payment of the Spirit. This noun is used here and in 2Co 11:26, so that in both NT uses it describes those who are not genuine believers. These men look true but in truth are staunch adversaries of the truth of the Gospel. They may have professed Christ, but they did not possess Christ (Ro 8:9+).

**THOUGHT** - Have you professed Christ? Good. Then let me ask have you possessed Christ, or better, has He possessed you? There are many people sitting in pews in American churches who have professed Christ (prayed a prayer, walked an aisle, etc), but they have never been possessed by Him, by His Spirit (Ro 8:9+) and are still deceptively dead in their trespasses and sins and are headed tragically for a Christ-less eternity. How do you know if you are a professor who has been possessed? Does 2 Cor 5:17+ describe your life? "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new** (**kainos** = brand new, a spiritual "new born") creature; the old things passed away; behold, **new** (**kainos** = brand new desires, new likes, new habits such as desire to read the Word of God, etc) things have come." Paul is not speaking of perfection in this passage, but he is speaking of a "new direction," "Heavenward," not "Hellward!" Has your life significantly changed since you professed Christ? The places you go, the things you say, the things you watch, the things you buy, etc, etc? If so you are born again and eternally secure in Christ! If not, you need to soberly ponder the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Mt 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does (**present tense**) the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "**Many** (NOT A FEW SADLY WILL BE DECEIVED!) will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE** (**present tense** = as a lifestyle, habitually, still living like an "old creature" in Adam) **LAWLESSNESS.**" (Mt 7:21+, Mt 7:22-23+)

In context the **false brethren** are surely the so-called **Judaizers**. By calling them "false" Paul is saying he had absolutely no confidence in their profession of faith because of their steadfast insistence on the need of circumcision for salvation. "Though they might have professed a belief in the gospel, they did not do so without an addition to the gospel. In Paul's assessment, this was "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6)." (Newton)

**Wiersbe** - The fact that Paul calls them **false brethren** indicates that they were not true Christians, but were only masquerading as such so they could capture the conference for themselves. [Bible Exposition Commentary](#)

**Machen** says: Paul here calls the Judaizers "**false brethren**," and the meaning of that term is clear. "Brother" in Paul's Epistles means "fellow-Christian," and thus a "false brother" is a man who claims to be a Christian or is thought to be a Christian and yet is not, or does not show himself by his present actions to be, a Christian at all. It is not a pleasant term, but the reason why it is not a pleasant term is that the thing that it designated was not a pleasant thing. These Judaizers might have seemed to a superficial observer to be true disciples, but in their heart of hearts, Paul seems to mean, they were Pharisees rather than disciples of Jesus Christ. They were depending upon their own works for salvation, and according to the apostle Paul a man cannot possibly do that if he is to be saved. So Paul calls them false brethren. Unlike the leaders of the modern Church the apostle Paul believed in calling things by their true names.

**Timothy George** identifies three main "parties" in this chapter - First, there is the Pauline party, consisting of Barnabas, Titus, and the apostle himself. Second, there are the "false brothers" who agitated for Titus to be circumcised and later imported their Judaistic tendencies to Antioch itself. ....The third party that plays a prominent role in the narrative are the leaders of the Jerusalem church, namely, James, Peter, and John, whose prominence had given them the name "pillars." (NAC)

Who brought these **false brethren** in to the young church? **W E Vine** suggests "Presumably these false brethren had been introduced into the church by "them that were of the circumcision,"Gal 2:12, mentioned in Acts 15:5. Party zeal often leads to unholy alliances."

**Stott** on **secretly brought in**: "This may mean either that they had no business to be in the church fellowship at all, or that they had gate-crashed the private conference with the apostles." [The Message of Galatians](#)

**Secretly brought in** (3920)(pareisaktos from **pareisago** = smuggle in = bring in along side of - **para** = alongside + **eiságo** = bring in, introduce) is a noun which literally describes something (someone) that has been brought in by the side of something else (in this context the false brought in next to the true believers). To smuggle in or sneak in alongside of. This word conveys the sense of brought in secretly, craftily, surreptitiously, or under false pretenses. **Pareisaktos** is used only in Gal 2:4 in the NT. One translation has "they wormed their way into our meeting."

Note the root verb **pareisago** is used by Peter to describe

"false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be **false teachers among you**, who will **secretly introduce** ([pareisago](#)) destructive ([apoleia](#)) heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction ([apoleia](#)) upon themselves." (2 Peter 2:1+)

The word **pareisaktos** was used of spies or traitors who infiltrate an opposing camp (Longenecker) or it could simply mean "alien" or "foreign" (Eadie; MM).

**NET Note** - The adjective **pareisaktous**, which relates to someone joining a group with false motives or false pretenses, applies to the **false brothers**." Although the expression "*false brothers with false pretenses*" is somewhat redundant, it captures the emphatic force of Paul's expression, which labels both these **"brothers" as false** (pseudadelphous) **as well as their motives**.

**Vine** note on **pareisaktos** - from **para** = "by the side," i.e., not straightforwardly, **eis** = "into," and **ago** = "to bring." The word is used by Strabo, a Greek historian contemporary with Paul, of enemies introduced secretly into a city by traitors within (the walls).

## SECRET SNEAKY SPIES "CLOAK AND DAGGER LANGUAGE!"

**Who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus** - NIV = "Some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus." They were not invited to the private conference but came anyway. Why did they "sneak in"? (1) To spy on our liberty and (2) make us slaves to the Law's rules and ceremonies. This is one of Satan's tactics, to subtly infiltrate a body of believers and bring them into bondage by adding some legal requirements for salvation. Thomas Jefferson who was apparently not a genuine believer (see his [Jeffersonian "bible"](#) where he cut out all the supernatural passages) did have a wise saying "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

**ILLUSTRATION OF SATAN'S TACTIC OF SNEAKING IN** - During one of the Billy Graham crusades in Los Angeles several years ago, a number of [Jehovah's Witnesses](#) made false counselor badges and went in to deal with people who were coming forward to receive Christ. This is a picture of what is actually happening here. These false brethren were "SPY[ING] OUT OUR LIBERTY."

**Who had sneaked in** ([3922](#)) ([pareiserchomai](#) from **pará** = alongside + **eisérchomai** = to enter) means literally to come in beside. And so it means to slip in or come in as a side issue, for example as did the law in Ro 5:20 since it had no direct efficacious role in salvation by grace through faith. Yes the Law was good and was a tutor to lead us Christ but only faith could join us to Christ (cp Gal 3:24, 25+). In John 10:1 the Lord Jesus describes such men as "thieves and robbers." The word usually implies stealth (Burton). The metaphor is that of spies or traitors introducing themselves by stealth into the enemy's camp (Lightfoot).

**Eadie** - Their work was that of spies-inspection for a sinister purpose.

Jude describes a similar scene of subtle enemy infiltration into the church warning that

"certain persons **have crept in unnoticed** ([pareisduno](#)), those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4+)

**To spy out** ([2684](#)) ([kataskopeo](#) from **kata** = intensive + **skopos** = distant mark looked at) means to view closely and then to spy out, i.e., to learn about something (the believer's freedom in Christ) by secret observation. [Kataskopeo](#) thus means to view closely or examine carefully.

Paul is using vocabulary from the world of espionage, because the opponents were conducting covert operations. "Like undercover agents, they had sneaked into the church to see what the Gentile Christians were up to. But they were more than informants; they were slave-traders. They were conspiring to hold the church hostage to the law." (Ryken)

**Kataskopeo** is used in NT only in Ga 2:4 and in the Lxx only in 1 Chr 19:13 and 2 Sa 10:3 = "the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to **spy it out** and overthrow it?"

Paul explains that freedom is found in Christ Jesus not in keeping the law.

**Phil Newton** applies the spy picture to the modern church asking "Should churches be on guard for the same kind of "spies" who have ill-motives to turn the church away from the purity of the gospel for a man-centered gospel? Indeed, we must be vigilant! Just how easy is it for a person of this stripe to "infiltrate" a church? In Baptist churches there is a little piece of paper called a "church letter," that in most cases can give a person carte blanche opportunity to join any other Baptist church. They can come from a Baptist church that does not preach the gospel, but with the "church letter," they expect to be accepted without question. In the earlier days when this practice was instituted, there was much more examination of those who made professions of faith in Christ. But now that is rarely the case. I know of two different people who, a few years ago, were interested in being church members. I had talked with them concerning the gospel and their salvation. One did not understand the gospel, while the other refused to receive the gospel on Christ's terms. They were interested in being church members but did not have an equal interest in the gospel. So, what did they do? They left attending our church and immediately joined two different Baptist churches in our city! I hope they both came to faith in Christ! But my real concern, having spent considerable time explaining the gospel to them, is that they satisfied their emotions by joining a church, being baptized, then ignoring the issue of the gospel. Now, unless a church has some means of examination set in place, these people can move to another city or within our city, join another Baptist church without question, and begin to infiltrate them with their false understanding of the gospel. The spies can still infiltrate our churches and cause immeasurable damage." ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Liberty which we have in Christ Jesus** - **Have** ([echo](#) - hold, possess) is in the [present tense](#) signifying continual possession! And I would add everlasting possession. Hallelujah! "It is **ours**, (hemon), for we are **having** it in Christ Jesus. It is our *present*, our asserted possession." ([Eadie](#)) Christians are not under and in bondage to the Mosaic Law but are under a new law which Paul described in Romans 8...

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free** ([eleutheroo](#)) under the law of sin and of death. (Ro 8:2+)

And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. (Ro 8:2NLT)

for the law of the Spirit, that of the life in Christ Jesus, freed you once for all from the law of the sinful nature and of death (Ro 8:2 Wuest) [Eerdmans Publishing](#)

For the new spiritual principle of life "in" Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death. (Ro 8:2 Phillips)

**Liberty** (freedom) ([1657](#)) ([eleutheria](#) from [eleutheros](#) = that which is capable of movement, freedom to go wherever one likes, unfettered; see [eleutheroo](#)) describes the state of being free and is the [antithesis](#) of enslavement or bondage. The believer's freedom is found in a Person, in Christ, and is experienced as we daily learn to abide in Him and thus receive the life giving flow of power from His Spirit. In the present context [eleutheria](#) speaks especially of freedom from the yoke of the Mosaic Law, including freedom from the Judaizer's requirement of physical circumcision.

Freedom in Christ is not the right to do as you please but  
The power to do as you should!

Paul uses [eleutheria](#) three more times in this short letter in Galatians 5:1+ declaring "It was for **freedom** that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." Notice the juxtaposed contrast - Freedom X Slavery. Again Paul declares "you were called to **freedom** ([eleutheria](#)), brethren; only do not turn your **freedom** ([eleutheria](#)) into an opportunity (see [aphorme](#)) for the **flesh**, but through love serve one another." (Gal 5:13+). Here note the juxtaposed contrast of freedom/flesh for it is the fallen flesh that seeks to keep us in bondage to the law.

**Luther** says: Human reason can think only in terms of the Law. It mumbles: "This I have done, this I have not done." But faith looks to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, given into death for the sins of the whole world. To turn one's eyes away from Jesus means to turn them to the Law. True faith lays hold of Christ and leans on Him alone. Our opponents cannot understand this. In their blindness they cast away the precious pearl, Christ, and hang onto their shabby works. They have no idea what faith is. How can they teach faith to others?

**MacArthur** adds "Christian freedom is not license. When we become free in Christ we lose our freedom to sin, of which we were once a slave. In Christ, "having been freed from sin, [we] become slaves of righteousness" (Ro 6:18+). "For you were called to freedom, brethren," Paul explains; "only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal 5:13+). Peter expresses the same truth in these words: "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God" (1 Pet. 2:16+). ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

## THE SINISTER MOTIVE OF THE PSEUDO BRETHERN

**In order to bring us into bondage** - **In order to** speaks of purpose and we should always be alert to [terms of purpose or result](#) which are usually identified by phrases such as so that, in order that, that, as a result. When you encounter a term of purpose, pause and propose a simple question "What is the purpose?" and let the context and the Spirit will be your Teacher. You may be pleasantly surprised at what He reveals! In the present context the purpose of these false brethren was very clear - BONDAGE! Absolute bondage to an impossible system of works righteousness.

Notice Paul says **US**. In other words not only would the Gentiles be impacted but these wolves in sheep's clothing might bring **US** into bondage. So it was not just an issue between the false brethren and Gentiles. Guzik writes "It might be easy for Paul to say, "This doesn't affect me. After all, I am a Jew and have been circumcised under the Law of Moses. I'll let Titus or other Gentiles deal with this problem, because these false brethren have a problem with them, not me." Paul realized that if the message of the Gospel was compromised, it wasn't just bondage for the Gentiles, but it was bondage for everyone who named the name of Jesus." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**F F Bruce** - As the gospel of grace liberates (cf. Gal 4:26+; Gal 5:1a+), so legalism enslaves (cf. Gal 4:24f+; Gal 5:1b+, Gal 5:3+). (NIGTC: Galatians)

**Bring us into bondage** ("in order that they might bring us into utter bondage") ([2615](#)) ([katadouloo](#) from **kata** = intensifies meaning but also can convey sense of "down" which suggests domination [cp "according [kata] to the law" - Ro 8:4+] + **douloo** = to enslave, bring into bondage) means to enslave utterly, absolutely, completely and without qualification. Can you get a picture of what Paul is saying by using this rare verb? [Katadouloo](#) is used only twice in the NT, here and in 2 Cor 11:20 "For you bear with anyone if **he enslaves** you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the

face." **Katadouloo** is the [antithesis](#) of the verb [eleutheroo](#) which means to make free.

**Katadouloo** - 7x in the Lxx - Gen. 47:21 Exodus 1:14 ("they rigorously imposed [Lxx = katadouloo] on them"); Exodus 6:5. ; Ezra 7:24; Jer. 15:14 ("I will make you serve your enemies" NET); Ezek. 29:18; 34:27

Here in Gal 2:4 Paul uses **katadouloo** in the [middle voice](#) (reflexive sense) which signifies they desire to make others a slave for themselves!

**Phillip Ryken** - **Freedom** has as many joys and struggles in the spiritual realm as it does in human society. Dr. King knew this, for he borrowed his famous words from an old Negro spiritual: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!" The song's first and primary meaning was about freedom from sin through Jesus Christ. Freedom in Christ was the apostle Paul's concern as he wrote Galatians, a letter sometimes known as the Magna Carta of Christian liberty. Paul knew how precious spiritual freedom is. He knew the price that Jesus paid on the cross to gain it. He also knew how easy it is to squander that freedom and return to spiritual bondage. This is why Paul wrote to the Galatians with such urgency. They believed the gospel of the cross and the empty tomb. They had gained true spiritual freedom by putting their faith in Christ crucified and Christ risen. But now they were under the spell of teachers who wanted to add the law of Moses to the gospel of Christ (see Gal. 3:1+). As a result, they were in danger of becoming enslaved all over again (see Gal. 5:1+). ([Reformed Expository Commentary -- Galatians](#))

**Phil Newton** notes that **bring us into bondage** "implies the slavery of the Law that has no power to justify. It was that yoke which the Jews bore for hundreds of years, that yoke of trying to position themselves before God in righteousness by their works of the law. The Law never justified anyone during that period, nor could it during Paul's day, nor does it in our own day. As we have noted previously, the hardest thing for a person to accept is that he can do absolutely nothing to justify himself before God. Man wants to do something. Particularly, in our society of rugged individualism, people are easily swayed into thinking that 'God helps those who help themselves', so they must help God out. They must add to the work of Christ their own works of service or their baptism or their following particular liturgies or their membership in particular churches. 'Oh, if I can just teach or preach or sing in the choir, then God will be pleased so that he just cannot reject me!' 'If I can just go on a mission trip or be on a church committee or be a church officer, then I will have what I need to be right with God!' My brethren, I have only one word for such thoughts: "BONDAGE!" Yes, the whole motive of those who creep into churches without truly being justified is to tie others up with the same bondage that has enslaved them. Miserable sinners love the company of more miserable sinners. They despise the company of the saints! They will work tirelessly and deceitfully, to persuade others that Jesus Christ and His finished work is just not enough. We stand with the Apostle to reject such false gospel!" ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

**Norman Bartlett** - The future tense (of bring us into bondage) tells us that it was not merely their intention, but that they thought they had assured hopes of success in bringing the Gentile believers under the yoke of Judaism. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." We may depend upon it that Satan and his minions will do everything within their power to induce believers to substitute a Gospel of works for trust in the all-sufficient merits of JESUS' blood shed upon the Cross of Calvary. Let not the enemies of the Gospel spike our guns by robbing us of reliance upon grace alone to save and keep us saved. ([Galatians 2:1-10 - Personal Explanation](#))

## SPIRITUAL FREEDOM: ELEUTHERIA

**A short digression of eleutheria or spiritual freedom** - It is paramount to understand that spiritual [freedom](#) does not equate with [license](#). Freedom never means the right to do as we please. To the contrary, true spiritual freedom is the power to do as we should.

Stated another way true liberty is living as we should not as we please. In no NT passage does this concept refer to political freedom nor to the Stoic's [fallacious](#) idea of freedom of the flesh from emotion and desire. Freedom does not equal license. In the NT, freedom takes its meaning from the fact that unredeemed human beings are locked in terrible bondage which is beyond their ability to overcome.

Freedom is attractive to sinful human nature, especially when misunderstood. Mankind's view of freedom is distorted, for true freedom is found in responsible discipline rather than in reckless dissipation. Peter warns, "Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16).

False teachers lure followers with promises of the freedom that our [fallen flesh](#) craves. The Bible describes these teachers "By appealing to the lustful desires of [sinful human nature](#), they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. **They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is slave to whatever has mastered him**' (2 Pe 2:18-19). The false promise of freedom that we can have a license to indulge ourselves is an invitation to sure spiritual disaster and ultimately to eternal death if one never experiences repentance and belief in Christ.

The freedom that Scripture offers does not include independence, or release from restriction. Instead, genuine Biblical freedom is to be found only in willingly choosing to submit to our new Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are His by right of blood purchase (1 Cor 6:19, 20, Rev 5:9) and yet we need to make the daily choice to obey Him but not as under law but under grace (for the Spirit energizes even our desire - Php 2:13NLT), and in so doing to prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable, and perfect (Ro 12:2). The believer's freedom in Christ allows us the privilege of entering into the wonderful will of the Father, which is only place we can experience genuine rest and perfect blessing. And so we have a spiritual paradox, for as a bondservants of Jesus -- on the one hand we are bound to Him but on the other we are free in Him! As Jesus Himself promised

"If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall **make you free** ([eleutheroo](#))....If therefore the Son shall **make you free** ([eleutheroo](#)), you shall be **free** (eleutheros) indeed." (John 8:31-32, 36)

**How can slavery to Christ be true freedom?** In several significant ways.

- (1). Only by submitting to our Master Jesus and living by His words are we free to experience Truth. Only then are we guided away from what hurts to what is truly beneficial.
- (2). Only by submitting to Master Jesus can we experience the immense power for true goodness that is provided for us in the Holy Spirit Who indwells us. What we could never do in our own strength, the Spirit can enable us to do. In a real sense, freedom is freedom to achieve exceeding abundantly more than we could ever ask or even think possible (Eph 3:20).
- (3). The kind of freedom that would release us from all restraint could never free us from the consequences of our actions (Gal 6:7, 8). The Christian knows that the consequences of his or her actions carry over even into eternity. Any freedom that is meaningful must release us from actions that lead to corruption.

A commitment to serve Jesus promises us holiness, and the consequences of a holy life are blessings now and forever. The blessing that being a bondservant of Jesus produces helps us realize that servitude provides the most real and wonderful freedom there can be.

Finally, we human beings are creatures. We have been shaped by God to love Him and to enjoy Him forever. Only by choosing to serve God can we become the people we were created to be. This freedom to experience our destiny is a wonderful freedom indeed! Little wonder that spies try to sneak in and steal our freedom in Christ!

**ILLUSTRATION: ON MEANING OF ELEUTHERIA** - Back in the nineteenth century our sixteenth president realized something radical must be done about slavery in our country. Unwilling to look the other way any longer, on **September 22, 1862**, he presented what came to be known as the Emancipation Proclamation, an official document condemning human slavery. Abraham Lincoln, realizing that slavery is completely against human dignity, officially abolished it from the United States on that day. Tragically, little changed in the daily life of our nation, even though the slaves were officially declared free. You know why; you've read the stories. The Civil War was still going on. The plantation owners never informed their slaves. The vast majority of the former slaves couldn't read, so they had no idea what the news was carrying. There was no mass media then to announce those kinds of presidential pronouncements. And so for the longest time, slavery continued even though it had been officially brought to an end. The war ended in April 1865. Do you know when Lincoln's declaration was officially enacted? When the people finally began to leave their enslaved lives and make their way toward freedom? December 18, 1865—more than three years after he first released his proclamation. Lincoln had been dead for months. The word traveled out of the streets of Washington and down into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, across the back roads of the Carolinas and into Georgia, then Alabama, then Mississippi, then Louisiana, then Texas, then Arkansas, announcing what had been true for more than a thousand days. Even then the word somehow either wasn't believed or wasn't acted upon. Those officially emancipated people, thinking slavery was the way they were condemned to exist, continued to live in bondage though they had been declared **free** men and women since the fall of 1862. (Churck Swindoll - [Embraced by the Spirit The Untold Blessings of Intimacy with God](#))

**Galatians 2:4 Don Fortner-Grace for Today 'Our Liberty' - Gal 2:4**

The Lord Jesus Christ has given us true liberty. In Christ we have been freed from sin, Satan and the law. In Him we are free from all religious traditions, customs and superstitions. And in Christ we are free to use every creature of God for food, happiness, comfort and satisfaction. Neither the church nor those who preach the gospel have any authority to bring God's people under bondage again, by making their own rules, dogmas and covenants for Christian conduct. I offer these suggestions with the prayer that they may help you to honor the Lord in the exercise of your liberty in Christ.

1. Do not make the use or non-use of indifferent things a point of merit before God. Indifferent things become idolatrous when you make the use or non-use of them a means of obtaining favor with God, a means of religious devotion, or a means of obtaining a peaceful conscience.
2. Use all things in moderation. The believer's principle of conduct is not total abstinence, but temperance, moderation and self-control. Eating is not wrong, but gluttony is. A glass of wine is not wrong (our Lord did provide the wine for the marriage feast of Cana), but drunkenness is wrong. Entertainment is not wrong, but reveling is. Our principle is 'Use all things wisely, abusing none.'
3. Carefully avoid offending your brother. I do not mean that you must submit to the self-righteous notions of men. But we must not be the cause of a brother acting contrary to his own conscience. This is what Paul means by offending the brethren. We must avoid it at all costs. My brother's conscience is more important than my personal desires.
4. Make your use of all things subservient to the glory of God, the gospel of Christ and the welfare of the church. In all things, make your love for Christ and his people the basis of your actions. Use your liberty in Christ for the honor of Christ, and you will not go far astray. We must avoid both licentiousness and legalism. Both are dreadful evils. God's people are called into liberty!

**Ian Paisley - Glorious Liberty**

"Our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." Galatians 2:4

The liberty which we have in Christ Jesus is the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

### I. The Liberty of the Acquittal by God

To be acquitted at the bar of God from all our sins, not by a mere pardon, but by an act of justification, through the full payment by another of all our transgressions, brings a liberty which no man understandeth but he who possesses it.

This is freedom indeed, the liberty with which Christ makes the sinner free. All sins fully paid for and their penalty met by the bloodshedding of Christ.

### II. The Liberty of Approach to God

Sin has erected a barrier between the sinner and God. The sinner cannot get near to God. His sins have separated him from his God.

But Christ has removed the barrier and demolished forever sin's wall of separation. He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. "Having boldness therefore brethren to enter into the Holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way." Oh walk that perfect way of liberty today, the liberty of approach to God.

### III. The Liberty of Acceptance by God

To be accepted by God, what a liberty is that!

"Accepted in the Beloved."

No fear! No darkness! No separation! Embraced! Cleansed! Perfect in Christ! That is the liberty of the saints in light. It can be yours today by the gift of God. Call on Christ to liberate your soul by the acquittal by God, the approach to God and the acceptance of God. (A Text A Day Keeps the Devil Away)

### Ian Paisley - Spy Mastering

"And that because of fake brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." Galatians 2:4

### Gospel Liberty

The Gospel is the Gospel of liberty, it delivers us from the tradition of the elders. There are those who would chain God's people with the goading bondage of the yoke of that tradition. They manufacture rules and condemn those who do not conform to their commandments. This unholy legalism must be clearly distinguished from lawfulness which is the keeping of God's holy commandments.

### The Spies

Paul was a spy exposor, and he uncovered the working of such a devil inspired emissary.

Note his language. He condemned them as "false brethren", who work "privily and unawares" "to bring the free people of God into bondage".

### The Counteraction

Paul moved ruthlessly against them, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Galatians 2:5. He was not even afraid to take on Peter, himself withstanding him to the face because he was to be blamed (verse 11).

Gospel liberty must be preserved at whatever cost.

We who have begun in the Spirit cannot perfect ourselves in the flesh. (A Text A Day Keeps the Devil Away)

### Galatians 2:5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

Greek: ois oude pros horan eixamen (1PAAI) te hupotage, hina e aletheia tou euaggeliou diameine (3SAAS) pros humas.

Amplified: To them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the Gospel might continue to be [preserved] for you [in its purity].

Phillips We did not give those men an inch, for the truth of the Gospel for you and all Gentiles was at stake.

Wuest To whom not even for an hour did we yield with reference to the particular voluntary submission (demanded), in order that the truth of the gospel might abide for you. [Eerdmans Publishing](#)

NET Galatians 2:5 But we did not surrender to them even for a moment, in order that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

GNT Galatians 2:5 ο ς ο δ̄ π ς ο ς ρ ο ν ε ξ α μ ε ν τ̄ π ο τ α γ̄ , ν α λ̄ θ ε ι α τ ο ε α γ γ ε λ ο υ δ ι α μ ε ν π ς μ ς .

NLT Galatians 2:5 But we refused to give in to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the gospel message for you.

KJV Galatians 2:5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

ESV Galatians 2:5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

ASV Galatians 2:5 to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

CSB Galatians 2:5 But we did not give up and submit to these people for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you.

NIV Galatians 2:5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

NKJ Galatians 2:5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

NRS Galatians 2:5 we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you.

YLT Galatians 2:5 to whom not even for an hour we gave place by subjection, that the truth of the good news might remain to you.

NAB Galatians 2:5 to them we did not submit even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain intact for you.

NJB Galatians 2:5 people we did not defer to for one moment, or the truth of the gospel preached to you might have been compromised.

GWN Galatians 2:5 But we did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the Good News would always be yours.

BBE Galatians 2:5 To whom we gave way not even for an hour; so that the true words of the good news might still be with you.

- **we did not yield in subjection:** Ga 3:1,2 Ac 15:2 Col 2:4-8 Jude 1:3
- **So that the truth of the gospel would remain with you:** Ga 2:14 4:16 Eph 1:13 Col 1:5 1Th 2:13
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### NO CAVING IN OR COMPROMISE CONCERNING THE GOSPEL

**But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour-** "We did not cave in to their demands." Phillips paraphrases it "We did not give those men an inch." Notice the **we** which indicates Paul and Barnabas (the leaders) and Titus (the test case) did not budge. The Greek uses **oude** indicating absolute negation. It never crossed their mind to yield on the essential truth of the Gospel.

**Barclay** has an interesting comment suggesting that "There is a battle behind this passage; and it seems likely that the leaders of the Church urged Paul, for peace's sake, to compromise, and to give in, in the case of Titus. But Paul stood like a rock. He knew that this was a test case, and he would not yield one inch for one moment. To yield would have been to accept the slavery of the law and to turn his back on the Christian freedom which is in Christ. In the end Paul's determination won the day."

**McGee** says: Paul stood by his guns. These false brethren said, "This man Titus who is here meeting with the church (and it was practically all Jewish then) has not even been circumcised!" Paul says, "No, and he's not going to be circumcised. He is as much a believer as any of you. He has been saved by faith apart from the Law. He is not about to follow any part of the Law for salvation." This is a tremendous stand that Paul is taking.

**Swindoll** comments "If Paul and Barnabas had sought peace at any price, the brilliant light of the glorious gospel of grace would have been eclipsed by the waning, reflected glory of an obsolete covenant of works. And if the Judaizers had won a victory at the Christian command center in Jerusalem, the outposts of the true faith would have suffered similar attacks at the hands of an emboldened insurgency of self-righteous frauds. This is why Paul and his associates refused to yield to the demands of the false teachers **"for even an hour"** (2:5). The survival of the truth of the gospel itself was at stake, and Paul wasn't willing to give even an inch." ([Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**Spurgeon** - It is impossible for us to estimate how much we owe to the apostle Paul. Of all who have ever lived, we who are Gentiles owe more to him than to any other man. See how he fought our battles for us. When our Jewish brethren would have excluded us because we were not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, how bravely did he contend that, if we were partakers of the same faith, Abraham is the father of all the faithful that he was loved of God, and the covenant was made with him, not in circumcision, but before he was circumcised, and that we are partakers of that covenant.

**Not...for even an hour** - an idiom for a very short period of time for "hour" was the smallest increment of time in the Greek language. . Paul did not compromise with them **one iota!** Stated another way Paul gave them no time at all! He brushed off their false teaching! And **expression of time** is at the beginning of the Greek sentence for emphasis, specifically in this context an emphatic contrast (i.e., an opposite idea - what is emphatically not intended). **Vine** adds that this "expression implies prompt resistance to a formal demand, and excludes the notion that Titus had been circumcised."

**Newton** - It was not even a casual thought in the Apostle's mind to compromise the truth of the gospel for the bondage of Jewish legalism. He had lived in that kind of legalism. He understood its enslaving power. Now he would not rest until the truth of the gospel glowed brightly among the Galatians. (Ibid)

As **Donald Campbell** notes "To impose circumcision on Titus would be to deny that salvation was by faith alone and to affirm that in addition to faith there must be obedience to the Law for acceptance before God. Thus the basic issue of the gospel was involved and Paul would not deviate or **yield** for a moment." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson (we did not yield)** - The compromisers pleaded for the circumcision of Titus "because of the false brethren" in order to have peace.

And to the end of his life with his last written words Paul commanded his young disciple Timothy, to **Retain** (**present imperative** = only possible as we rely on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit) the **standard of sound** ("health", spiritual health giving) words (in context refers to the truth of the Gospel) which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." (2Ti 1:13)

**Yield** (1502) (**eiko**) means to give place, to yield, to give way, to obey, to submit. BDAG says eiko means to yield to someone, "to give way before expression of force or argument." This word was used in secular Greek meaning to give the horse the rein. It is found only in Gal 2:5.

**Subjection** (5292) (**hupotage** from **hupotasso** = to submit, be under obedience) is a noun which means subordination, subjection, submission, obedience. **Wuest** adds that **hupotage** "denotes a voluntary act, not one imposed from without." **BDAG** - "only passive the state of submissiveness, subjection, subordination, as opposed to setting oneself up as controller."

**Vine** - hupotagē, used again in 2 Corinthians 9:13 of the submission of Christians to Christ; in 1 Timothy 2:11 of the position of women in the church; and in 1 Timothy 3:4 of the relationship between children and their parents. "Submission" is to be preferred to "subjection" here, inasmuch as to submit is to yield oneself, whereas to subject is to cause another person to yield.

**Hupotage** - 4x in 4v (no uses in Septuagint): control(1), obedience(1), subjection(1), submissiveness(1)

2 Corinthians 9:13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your **obedience** to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,

Galatians 2:5 But we did not yield in **subjection** to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

1 Timothy 2:11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire **submissiveness**.

1 Timothy 3:4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under **control** with all dignity

## THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

**So that the truth of the gospel would remain with you-** "Paul's defense of the Gospel he had received from God was not made for any personal or selfish reasons" (Boice) Preservation of the integrity of the Gospel was of paramount importance in the mind of Paul! **So that** (**hina**) introduces a **purpose clause**. What is the purpose? Paul stated why he yielded absolutely no ground to the Judaizers regarding the Gospel. There was absolutely no room for compromise when lives and eternity hang in the balance!

As an aside the **truth of the Gospel** is the best way to expose the lies "the false brethren secretly brought in" in the previous passage. They offered a "false gospel" (really not a gospel - cf Gal 1:6-7) and here Paul emphasizes the true Gospel.

What is the **truth of the gospel?** **Martin Luther** wrote, "Now the truth of the gospel is, that our righteousness cometh by faith alone, without the works of the law. The corruption, or the falsehood of the gospel is, that we are justified by faith, but not without the works of the law." ([Galatians](#)).

**Phil Newton** comments that "There are plenty who say they believe in being justified by faith, but they refuse to qualify that with by faith alone. For they will add to the gospel something of their own making. To this we must stand against without flinching. I agree with **Martin Luther**, "For a true and steadfast faith must lay hold upon nothing, but Christ alone, and in the terrors of conscience it hath nothing else to lean upon, but this diamond Christ Jesus".

The **truth of the Gospel** speaks not so much of the "true Gospel" but of the "true teaching of the Gospel." True teaching stands in contrast to perversion by adulteration of elements such as necessity of obedience to the Law of Moses.

**John Calvin** - The **truth of the gospel** denotes its genuine purity, or, which means the same thing, its pure and entire doctrine. For the false apostles did not altogether set aside the gospel, but mixed up with it their own notions, so as to give it a false and disguised aspect, which it always has when we make the smallest departure "from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3.)

**Eadie** adds "**The truth of the gospel**" is not simply the true gospel, but truth as a distinctive element of the gospel, opposed to the false views of its cardinal doctrine which the reactionary Judaists propounded. That truth was, in its negative aspect, the non-obligation of the Mosaic law on Gentile believers, - in its positive aspect, justification by faith." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Wuest** - This was a grave crisis. The entire status of Gentile Christianity was involved in the case of Titus. The question as to whether Christianity was to be merely a modified form of legalistic Judaism or a system of pure grace, was at stake. Justification by faith was on trial. Circumcision would have set it aside. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson on the truth of the gospel** - It was a grave crisis to call for such language. The whole problem of Gentile Christianity was involved in the case of Titus, whether Christianity was to be merely a modified brand of legalistic Judaism or a spiritual religion, the true Judaism (the children of Abraham by faith). The case of Timothy (CIRCUMCISION IN Acts 16:1-3+) later was utterly different, for he had a Jewish mother and a Greek father. Titus was pure Greek. ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Anders** says: Paul stood absolutely firm because the truth of the gospel was at stake. To impose circumcision on Titus would be to deny that salvation was by faith alone and to affirm the law as the means to God's acceptance. (HNTC-Galatians)

Paul never budged from his position of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. This is what Jude means **to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints**" (Jude 1:3+) Paul says he absolutely did not yield to assaults on the integrity of the message that one is to believe in in order to be saved. Writing to Titus who was going into the isle of Crete where there were false teachers Paul instructed him to appoint leaders who would be "**holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.**" (Titus 1:9+)

**MacArthur** adds this note on Paul's circumcision of Timothy - He was not making a concession to the Judaizers, but rather was giving Timothy closer identity with Jews to whom they might witness. Timothy was circumcised as a Jew not as a Christian. His circumcision had no relationship to his salvation but simply gave him entrance to Jewish synagogues, from which he would otherwise have been excluded. **Titus**, however, was a full Gentile, and to have had him circumcised would have undercut the gospel of grace and made him a monument of victory for the Judaizers. ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Phil Newton** explains how to stand firm on the truth of the Gospel - How do we take such a stand? (1) I believe it begins with spending our lives studying the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that by knowing "the truth of the gospel," we can easily recognize error. The main reason that error spreads through churches comes right back to a neglect of studying the rich truths of the gospel. (2) Then we need to use every opportunity God gives for proclaiming the truth of the gospel to unbelievers, "seeing that I have been entrusted with the gospel." Our unbelieving friends hear plenty of 'false gospel' from the world and unfortunately, sometimes from organized churches. So we must know what constitutes the gospel and not hesitate to explain it with authority to others, always with a view that God might be pleased to use our gospel explanations to bring a sinner to faith in Christ. (3) I believe we must also be willing to take a stand in discussions on the gospel among professing Christians. There are those who are genuinely saved, but who are weak in the faith. They may be facing some confusions, so graciously, patiently, and tenderly, help them through in grasping the glorious truth of the gospel. (Ibid)

**Truth** (225) (**aletheia**) speaks of the certainty, validity, truthfulness, dependability, uprightness of the good news of God in contrast to the lie of law keeping propagated by the false brethren.

**Gospel** (2098) (**euaggelion**) is the good news that God has provided in Christ a way of escape from the overwhelming death-dealing flood of sin, self and Satan.

The truth of the **Gospel** is a like multifaceted precious jewel...

- the Gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23)
- the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1) - it centers in Christ
- the Gospel of God (Mk 1:14) - it originates with God and was not invented by man
- the Gospel of the kingdom of God (Lk 16:16)
- the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+),
- the Gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)
- the Gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+)
- the Gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4)
- the Gospel of your salvation (Ep 1:13+)
- the Gospel of peace (Ep 6:15+)
- the Gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8)
- the glorious Gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11)
- In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it "my Gospel" indicating that the special emphasis he gave the Gospel in his ministry.

**Wiersbe** says: Ever since Paul's time, the enemies of grace have been trying to add something to the simple **gospel** of the grace of God. They tell us that a man is saved by faith in Christ plus something—good works, the Ten Commandments, baptism, church membership, religious ritual—and Paul made it clear that these teachers are wrong. In fact, Paul pronounced a curse on any person (man or angel) who preaches any other gospel than the gospel of the grace of God, centered in Jesus Christ.

**Remain with you** - The idea of **remain** ([diameno](#)) is remain unchanged, to remain continually with the Galatians. **Wuest** adds that "The idea of firm possession is present in the compound verb **diameno**."

**NET Note** - "Paul evidently viewed the demands of the so-called "false brothers" as a departure from the truth contained in the gospel he preached. This was a very serious charge (see Gal 1:8)" (NET Note)

**Remain** (1265) ([diameno](#) from **dia** = intensifies meaning + **meno** = to remain) remain permanently (of God the Son - Heb 1:11) or to continue in the same place. To stay the same (mute in Lk 1:22). When **diameno** is used to describe people it means to remain constant or to stand by (as those did with Jesus in Lk 22:28). It is used to describe a circumstance, state or condition that continues and thus remains the same (2Pet 3:4). In Hebrews 1:11 the idea is that it continues to exist. Here in Galatians 2:5 **diameno** is used figuratively of the Gospel continuing in association with the Galatians. **Diameno** is a stronger way of saying it than if one used just the root verb **meno**, abide.

**Diameno** is used in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) of Psalm 119:89 to describe God's Word - "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is **settled** (Heb = natsab = to take one's stand, to appoint, to erect; Lxx = **diameno**) in heaven." Don't you love that truth! It also means God's Word of the Gospel is forever and our salvation based on that Gospel is settled forever in Heaven!

**Wuest** on **remain** (rest) **with you** - **With you** is from *pros humas*. The idea is not that of simple rest. The preposition expresses the relation of an active bearing on life. One could translate **for you**, and paraphrase by the words **with a view to your welfare**. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

### Galatians 2:5 Don Fortner-Grace for Today

'To whom we gave no place by subjection' Gal 2:5

In the early days of the Church there were some self-appointed, freelance preachers who came from Jerusalem to Antioch, perverting the gospel of Christ and subverting the souls of men. They were preaching the law of Moses, telling God's people that faith in Christ is not sufficient; you must also keep the law of Moses. Paul and Barnabas refused to tolerate their heresy. Paul calls these legalists 'false brethren' and 'spies'. His choice of terms was not accidental. Usually those who preach and promote the law of Moses spend a great deal of time spying on others, so that they may bolster their own claims to 'righteousness' by sitting in, judgment upon others. Paul shows us by his example that the spirit and doctrines of legalism must not be tolerated by the people of God. It matters not whether men preach the law of Moses as a basis for justification, as the measure of sanctification, as a rule of life, as a motive for Christian service, or as the grounds of reward in heaven—all preaching of law works is an intolerable evil. Let no one confuse the issue. The issue is not godliness or ungodliness of life. The issue is not what the believer does, or how the believer lives in this world. The issue is the motive and attitude of the heart. The legalist is motivated by fear. The believer is motivated by love. The legalist hopes to be rewarded for his work. The believer hopes to honor God in his work. All law service is looked upon and performed as a matter of duty. Prayer, Bible reading, attendance at public worship and tithing always have an element of either the fear of punishment or the promise of reward, as they are performed by the legalist. The believer prays because his heart longs to commune with God, reads the Word because he wants to know God, attends worship because he desires to hear from God and gives because he loves God. The service and work of love is considered a privilege by the one who performs it. And you can be sure of this: God will never accept anything except that which is done with a willing heart (2 Cor. 8:12).

### Galatians 2:6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

Greek: apo de ton dokounton (PAP) einai (PAN) ti po oi pote esan ouden moi [e] diapherei (PAI) prosopon ho Theos anthrōpou o lambanei (PIA-3S) emoi gar hoi dokountes (V-PPA-NMP) ouden prosanethento (V-AIM-3P)

Amplified: Moreover, [no new requirements were made] by those who were reputed to be something—though what was their individual position and whether they really were of importance or not makes no difference to me; God is not impressed with the positions that men hold and He is not partial and recognizes no external distinctions—those [I say] who were of repute imposed no new requirements upon me [had nothing to add to my Gospel, and from them I received no new suggestions].

Phillips And as far as the leaders of the conference were concerned (I neither know nor care what their exact position was: God is not impressed with a man's office), they had nothing to add to my Gospel.

Wuest But to be something from (at the hands of) those who were of repute, whatever they were aforesaid, is of no importance to me. God accepts not man's person. For those who were of repute imposed nothing on me. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:6 But from those who were influential (whatever they were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism between people)-- those influential leaders added nothing to my message.

GNT Galatians 2:6 τι οτι οδοκουντων ενα τι πο οποτεσαν οδ ν μοι διαφρει πρσωπον [ ] θες νθρ που ο λαμβνει μο γρο δοκο ντες οδ ν προσαν θεντο,

NLT Galatians 2:6 And the leaders of the church had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.)

KJV Galatians 2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

ESV Galatians 2:6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.

ASV Galatians 2:6 But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth not man's person) -- they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me:

CSB Galatians 2:6 Now from those recognized as important (what they really were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism)-- they added nothing to me.

NIV Galatians 2:6 As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message.

NKJ Galatians 2:6 But from those who seemed to be something-- whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man-- for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

NRS Galatians 2:6 And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- those leaders contributed nothing to me.

YLT Galatians 2:6 And from those who were esteemed to be something -- whatever they were then, it maketh no difference to me -- the face of man God accepteth not, for -- to me those esteemed did add nothing,

NAB Galatians 2:6 But from those who were reputed to be important (what they once were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- those of repute made me add nothing.

NJB Galatians 2:6 but those who were recognised as important people -- whether they actually were important or not: There is no favouritism with God -those recognised leaders, I am saying, had nothing to add to my message.

GWN Galatians 2:6 Those who were recognized as important people didn't add a single thing to my message. (What sort of people they were makes no difference to me, since God doesn't play favorites.)

BBE Galatians 2:6 But from those who seemed to be important (whatever they were has no weight with me: God does not take man's person into account): those who seemed to be important

gave nothing new to me;

- **Those who were of high reputation:** Ga 2:2,9 6:3 2Co 11:5,21-23 12:11 Heb 13:7,17
- **What they were makes no difference to me:** Ga 2:11-14 Job 32:6,7,17-22 Mt 22:16 Mk 6:17-20 12:14 Lu 20:21 2Co 5:16
- **God shows no partiality:** Job 34:19 Ac 10:34 Ro 2:11 1Pe 1:17
- **who were of reputation contributed nothing to me:** Ga 2:10 Ac 15:6-29 2Co 12:11
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NON-CONTRIBUTION FROM THOSE OF REPUTATION

**Campbell** - "Having completed his discussion of Titus, Paul resumed the narrative relating to his conference with the apostles in Jerusalem." (BKC)

**Those who were of high reputation** ("the influential men") - The apostolic leaders of the church at Jerusalem.

**Reputation** is the verb [dokeo](#) which Paul uses 4 times in this section - Gal 2:2 "those who were of **reputation**", Gal 2:6 "those who were of high **reputation**," Gal 2:6 those who were of **reputation**," and Gal 2:9 "James and Cephas and John, who were **reputed**."

**Wuest** - Not only did Paul successfully maintain his position with regard to the matter of Gentile immunity from the obligation of circumcision at the Jerusalem council, but the persons of eminence in the church there, imposed no restrictions nor commands upon him relative to the matter. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**What they were makes no difference to me** - At first glance, this sounds a bit arrogant, but that is by no means meant to [denigrate](#) or [deprecate](#) the esteemed apostles!

**Don Anderson** - He certainly is not degrading the Jerusalem leadership here. He is just emphasizing the fact that really the message of no Christian worker is right just simply because of the greatness of the worker. God is not accepting man's person—He uses man as a mere vehicle to communicate His message, even as the apostle has referred to this in Galatians 1:11-12. ([Notes](#))

As **Wuest** explains "Paul means no disrespect. He is merely asserting his own independence of them, thus by contrast setting off his apostolic authority in the light of their's. He says that it made no difference with him what their former position was, referring to their former intercourse with the Lord Jesus. The knowing Christ after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16) gives one no position of preeminence in the Church. Furthermore, he says that God is no respecter of persons, literally, "God does not receive the face of a man." He shows no partiality because of a man's natural ability, his position or possessions in the various departments of human society." ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

**John Stott** - "Paul's words are neither a denial of, nor a mark of disrespect for, their apostolic authority. He is simply indicating that, although he accepts their office as apostles, he is not overawed by their person as it was being inflated (by the false teachers)." (Stott [The Message of Galatians](#))

**John Butler** - The Bible presents to us an impartial God. God can never be factually accused of unjust favoritism. God is always fair, impartial and equitable. His blessings and His curses are not without good reasons which substantiate his impartiality towards people.

In his comments on Romans 2:11 **John Piper** observes that **impartiality** "is such a major truth about God that the New Testament seems to invent a word for it—several words. Before the New Testament there are no instances of the word used here for "partiality" or "respecter of persons." The idea was there in the Old Testament: God does not "receive face," they would say, that is, he is "impartial"—he is not moved by irrelevant external appearances. He sees through them and goes to the heart of the matter and is not partial to appearance and circumstance. Nobody breaks the rules and gets away with it, no matter how powerful or clever or wealthy or networked. All are judged by the same measure. In the New Testament this was so important to make clear that the writers took these two words, "receive face" and combined them into a new verb in James 2:9—"be-a-face-receiver" (prosopolempteo)—and two new nouns—"a-face-receiver" (prosopolempetes, Acts 10:34+) and "face-receiving" (prosopolempsia, Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25, James 2:1+). There is no "face-receiving" with God, Paul says." ([There Is No Partiality With God, Part 1](#))

**MacArthur** explains why Paul said **God shows no partiality** - The unique privileges of the twelve therefore did not make their apostleship more legitimate or authoritative than Paul's.

**Lange on God shows no partiality** - He makes no such distinction, to Him the senior Apostles are not "of repute" in contrast with Paul; he has chosen Paul to be an Apostle as much as them.

**God shows no partiality** - More literally this reads "the face of man God does not accept" God does not play favorites a truth echoed throughout Scripture. Indeed, impartiality is one of God's great attributes [See impartial](#)...

For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and **the awesome God Who does not show partiality**, nor take a bribe. (Dt 10:17)

Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for **the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or partiality** or the taking of a bribe." (2 Chr 19:7)

(God) **shows no partiality to princes**, nor regards the rich above the poor, for they all are the work of His hands (Job 34:19)

And they \*sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for **You are not partial to any**." (Mt 22:16)

Comment - They conclude their introduction by saying (again literally according to a Greek and Hebrew idiom), "For you do not look at the face of men," in other words, "You are impartial." See 1 Sam. 16:7

And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that **God is not one to show partiality**," (Acts 10:34)

For there is no partiality with God. (Romans 2:11+)

And if you address as **Father the One who impartially judges** (literally, "the non-face showing judge") according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; (1Pe 1:17+)

## PAUL'S MESSAGE - NO MODIFICATIONS!

**Those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me** - The NIV says "those men added nothing to my message." The Amplified has "those [I say] who were of repute imposed no new requirements upon me [had nothing to add to my Gospel, and from them I received no new suggestions]." The apostles had contributed nothing to Paul's knowledge or understanding of the Gospel or to his authority to preach the Gospel.

**Anderson** comments "This is an amazing statement because you would expect that the key leaders—or the top brass—would add something in addition to the ministry of the Apostle Paul or at least would endeavor to correct him some way." ([Notes](#))

Paul had received the Gospel message and his call to be a Gospel messenger from God...

"For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ...But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood," (Gal 1:11-12, 15-16+)

Paul had no doubts about his calling and his revelation. Since Paul received his message and authority from Christ, how could men, even those of "high reputation" add anything to his message of salvation in the Gospel?

**Newton** adds that Paul "was not being cocky by such a statement, but rather his understanding of the gospel was on the same par as theirs. They did not make any additions, in this case circumcision, to his gospel message. Instead, they all recognized that God had entrusted them with the gospel and that the Lord Himself had sent them to their respective territories of gospel ministry."

**John Eadie** - God is impartial in the bestowment of His gifts and in the selection of His instruments. The apostle takes God for his model, and he judges and acts accordingly. "I acted," as if he had said, "in my estimate of these men, and in my conference with them, without regard to such external elements as often influence human judgments and occasionally warp them." He showed no undue leaning on them, though they justly stood so high in the esteem and confidence of the mother church in Jerusalem. ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Wuest** - In these words (**contributed nothing**) Paul says what he began to say at the beginning of the verse. The Jerusalem apostles imposed on him no burden of doctrine or practice, and imparted to him nothing in addition to what he knew. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**Contributed** (4323) ([prosanatithemi](#) from *prós* = towards, in addition to + [anatithemi](#) from *ana* = up + *tithemi* = to put) means to lay up in addition, to impart or communicate further (as here in Gal 2:6) or by way of consultation, to confer with, consult as in the present passage. The idea is the leaders could not communicate any additional facts or truths regarding the basic Gospel message of salvation by faith plus nothing.

**Prosanatithemi** is used only in Gal 1:16 and Gal 2:6.



The root verb **anathemi** means to set forth one's cause (Acts 25:14), to expound with a request for counsel, approval, or decision, to communicate **anathemi** in Gal. 2:2). The shorter form **anathemi**, is the less intensive word simply signifying the imparting of information, rather than conferring with others to seek advice.

In Gal 1:16 the idea is "to lay a matter before others so as to obtain counsel or instruction." (Vine) To present one's cause to another as for approval or judgment. To go to someone for advice something Paul absolutely did not (ouden = absolute negation) do in this visit to Jerusalem!

#### Galatians 2:6-10 TODAY IN THE WORD

In his album "Present Reality," musician and writer Michael Card explores the Christ-centered heart of Paul. Introducing the album, he writes: "Paul was caught up in the transforming power of the realization that Christ is both living and present. The mystery of Christ, he called it, the hope of glory." One song contains these gospel lyrics, based on Galatians 3:

[God] made a better way  
When the moment was right He sent His own Son  
And He opened the way so that everyone  
Could have hope.

As Paul continues in today's reading to defend his apostleship, his commitment to the gospel is a constant theme. The greatness of the other apostles' reputations didn't matter to him--his gospel came from God Himself (v. 6). The message of a Christian worker is not superior or right because of the greatness of the worker. From the context it is clear that Paul does not mean to degrade the position of the Jerusalem leadership. The respect he gives them is evident from the very fact that he comes to them for a definitive solution to a knotty problem.

James, Peter and John recognized that Paul had been made an apostle to the Gentiles as Peter had been to the Jews (v. 7). They also recognized that Paul had not launched into a ministry to the Gentiles on his own; God had entrusted it to him (1 Cor. 9:17). The other apostles reached the conclusion that Paul had a commission equal to Peter's because they saw that God had wrought just as great spiritual works through the one as through the other (Gal. 2:8).

#### APPLY THE WORD

When Paul was commissioned and sent off (vv. 7-9), he became the forerunner for world missions. How much do you know about the missionaries supported by your church or denomination? Are you up-to-date on their ministries and prayer requests? Here are several ideas for becoming more involved with your church's missions program: (1) Browse the bulletin board for recent prayer letters. Sign up to receive one. (2) As a family, adopt a missionary family to pray for and correspond with. (3) Begin financially supporting one missionary or missionary family on a regular basis.

#### Galatians 2:6-10 TODAY IN THE WORD

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

Until just two years ago, tensions between minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese had plunged Sri Lanka into a decades-long civil war. Now that the war has ended, Tamils and Sinhalese are overcoming ethnic barriers and finding commonalities around two surprising things: cricket and cuisine. Once-bitter enemies have found themselves cheering for the same teams and enjoying the same food. Tragically, ethnic conflicts have simmered across the globe, from the distant past continuing to the present day. Ethnic identity can comprise an important part of who we are, but sometimes it is twisted into a dividing line to separate "us" from "them." Even the church has suffered from this tendency.

In the first-century, new Christian believers didn't automatically lose the ethnic labels of "Jew" and "Gentile." Jews who had converted to the Christian faith still retained a strong sense of their Jewish-ness. Gentiles struggled to overcome the "outsider" status that had been theirs in the worship of Yahweh for many centuries. The Galatian churches found themselves at the center of these ethnic tensions. Did identifying oneself with Jesus and choosing to follow Him mean shedding the ethnic distinctions of centuries past? What did it mean to be a Jew or Gentile in the light of the cross?

In Galatians 2, Paul shares details of his second trip to Jerusalem, which turned out to be a very amicable meeting with Peter. They affirmed each other's calling by God: Peter had been commissioned to take the gospel to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles. Paul affirmed that God was indeed at work through the ministry of Peter, and despite their later disagreements, he did not seek to discredit Peter's ministry in any way.

But for all the respect and honor that Paul pays to Peter and to his ministry, there is no sign of Paul's subordination to Peter. Paul knew that the false teachers had accused him of being a second-tier apostle with a second-rate gospel. But he will not back down from the defense of his apostleship.

APPLY THE WORD Today's reading paves the way for Paul to discuss the later disagreement he had with Peter. He models for us what constructive disagreement can look like in the church. Disagreement does not have to be synonymous with personal attack. Paul respected Peter and believed they were partnering together in the work of the gospel. And on the other hand, Paul didn't assume any kind of false humility. He unapologetically confronted a fundamental compromise of the gospel.

#### Galatians 2:7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised

Greek: alla tounanton idontes (V-APA-NMP) hoti pepisteumai (V-RIM/P-1S) to euangelion tes akrobystias kathos Petros tes peritomēs

Amplified: But on the contrary, when they [really] saw that I had been entrusted [to carry] the Gospel to the uncircumcised [Gentiles, just as definitely] as Peter had been entrusted [to proclaim] the Gospel to the circumcised [Jews, they were agreeable];

Phillips In fact they recognised that the Gospel for the uncircumcised was as much my commission as the Gospel for the circumcised was Peter's.

Wuest But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with (the responsibility of preaching) the gospel to the uncircumcised as Peter with (the responsibility of preaching) the Gospel to the circumcised. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

GNT Galatians 2:7 ἄλ το νότον ὀ ντες τι πεπιστευμαι τ ε εγγλιον τ ς κροβυστ ας καθ ς πι τρος τ ς περιτομη ς.

NLT Galatians 2:7 Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews.

KJV Galatians 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

ESV Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised

ASV Galatians 2:7 but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision

CSB Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised,

NIV Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.

NKJ Galatians 2:7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter

NRS Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised

YLT Galatians 2:7 but, on the contrary, having seen that I have been entrusted with the good news of the uncircumcision, as Peter with that of the circumcision,

NAB Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter to the circumcised,

NJB Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, once they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been entrusted to me, just as to Peter the gospel for the circumcised

GWN Galatians 2:7 In fact, they saw that I had been entrusted with telling the Good News to people who are not circumcised as Peter had been entrusted to tell it to those who are circumcised.

BBE Galatians 2:7 But, quite the opposite, when they saw that I had been made responsible for preaching the good news to those without circumcision, even as Peter had been for those of the circumcision

- **seeing that I had been entrusted:** Ga 2:9 Ac 15:12,25,26 2Pe 3:15
- **the Gospel to the uncircumcised:** Ga 1:16 Acts 13:46-48 Acts 18:6 Acts 28:28 Ro 1:5 Ro 11:13 1Th 2:4 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### AU CONTRAIRE

**Au contraire** is a French phrase which means contrary to expectations

**But on the contrary** - What is he contrasting? The fact that the leaders communicated nothing additional to the Gospel Paul proclaimed. For seventeen years he had preached the gospel without their having had

the least part in it. In sum Paul writes that James and Cephas and John acknowledged that his message was of divine origin and affirmed it as truth without reservation.

**Wuest** - Paul states here that instead of the Jerusalem apostles championing the case of the Judaizers as certain had hoped, they came boldly over to Paul's side after they had heard the issue discussed in private conference ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

**Eadie** writes "They not only gave me no instructions, as if my course had been disapproved by them, "but on the contrary"-  $\lambda\lambda$  το  $\nu\omega\nu\rho\iota\upsilon\upsilon$  (alla tounanton) - their conduct was the very opposite; neither jealousy, nor disparagement of me-far from it,—"but on the contrary, they gave me the right hand of fellowship." (Ibid)

**Seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel to the uncircumcised**- The point here is that the apostles in Jerusalem fully recognized that Paul was entrusted by God to preach the Gospel. I like the Phillips paraphrase "In fact they recognised that the Gospel for the uncircumcised was as much my commission as the Gospel for the circumcised was Peter's."

**Entrusted** is in the [perfect tense](#) which implies that Paul's commission was permanent, as long as there was breath in his lungs, there was a Gospel message for any Gentile willing to listen! O, to be so focused on this incredible privilege we have to proclaim the Gospel that sets captives free, now and forever. Amen!

**I had been entrusted** ([4100](#))([pisteuo](#)) in active voice means to believe but here is in the passive voice which means to be entrusted with something as for example the Jews who "were entrusted with the oracles of God." (Ro 3:2) Here Paul a Jew has been entrusted with taking **the Gospel to the uncircumcised**, a metaphorical description of the Gentiles. Paul uses **pisteuo** 3 more times in Galatians but all of these are in the sense of believing in Christ Jesus for salvation (Gal 2:16, 3:6, 22).

**Wuest** explains that "**entrusted**" (pisteuo) "was also a technical word used in the imperial government of Rome. The imperial secretary used the technical expression pepisteumai, I have been entrusted, the qualifying word being added which would designate the matter with which he was entrusted. The apostles were the imperial secretaries of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, to whom was entrusted the writing and propagation of the New Testament message." ([Galatians Commentary](#))

Paul used **entrusted (pisteuo)** in the same "technical sense current in the Roman world at that time" (as discussed in previous paragraph) in several passages -

- 1 Cor 9:17 - "I **have** a stewardship **entrusted (perfect tense)** to me"
- 1 Th 2:4 - "we have been approved by God **to be entrusted** (aorist passive infinitive) with the Gospel"
- 1 Ti 1:11 - "according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, with which **I have been entrusted**. (aorist passive indicative)"
- Titus 1:3 - "at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation [the Gospel] with which **I was entrusted** (aorist passive indicative).

In Paul's letter to the saints at Thessalonica, Paul wrote that "we (cp "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy" - 1 Th 1:1) have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel (1Th 2:4).

**With the Gospel (euaggelion)**, the good news.

### THE SAME GOSPEL TO TWO GROUPS

**Wuest** - Paul speaks of the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision. His thought is not that there are two different gospels, two different types of messages adjusted to the needs of the Jews and the Gentiles respectively. He means that to him was committed the responsibility of taking the gospel of grace to the Gentiles, and that to Peter was given the commission of taking it to the Jews. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

Burton says that the context demonstrates that Paul regarded the distinction between the gospel entrusted to him and that entrusted to Peter as not one of content but of the persons addressed.

Luke records "And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first (Jews - cp Ro 1:16); since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, **behold, we are turning to the Gentiles**. 47 "For thus the Lord has commanded us, **I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.**" 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:46-48)

**Comment** - Quoting Isa 42:6, Paul showed that he clearly understood God's intention for **the Jewish nation to be a light to the Gentiles** Instead of quoting his own commission to the Gentiles given to him on the road to Damascus, he chose to quote God's commission of all Jews as found in the Old Testament. In rejecting that commission, the Jewish leaders who listened to Paul not only rejected the Gentiles and Paul but in effect rejected God Himself. As a result, Paul turned to the Gentiles, who immediately "began rejoicing and glorifying the work of the Lord." The result? "The Word of the Lord spread through the whole region." Yes, the nations are responsive to the gospel, if we will only bring it to them! Beloved, you may not be called to go to foreign soil but you can still go "vicariously" by praying for missionaries and for hidden people groups daily - see [Joshua project unreached of the day](#) and [Global Prayer Digest](#).

Writing to the saints at Rome Paul declared "through Whom (Jesus Christ our Lord - Ro 1:4) we have received grace (Note he mentions grace first and then his title) and apostleship **to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles**, for His name's sake. (Ro 1:5)

Paul reminded Timothy "I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) **asa teacher of the Gentiles** in faith and truth." (1 Ti 2:7)

**Just as Peter had been to the circumcised** - Peter was to go to the Jews. Of course this did not exclude proclamation of the Gospel to a Gentile named Cornelius in Acts 10 and Acts 11+! They had just ONE MESSAGE but TWO DIFFERENT MISSION FIELDS.

**McGee** says: Let's understand that there were not two gospels in the sense of Peter's gospel and Paul's gospel. These men were in complete agreement. The gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision refer to the groups the gospel was going to.

**Circumcised** ([4061](#))([peritome](#)) refers to one who is literally circumcised, which in the ancient world was virtually always the Jews. Circumcised is used in a figurative sense to refer to ethnicity in Ro 3:30; 4:9, 12; 15:8; Gal 2:7-9; Eph 2:11; Col 3:11.

As we have noted above the most important circumcision is not physical but spiritual by the Spirit - see Dt 10:16, 30:6, Jer 4:4, 9:26, Ezek 44:7, Col 2:11; Ro 2:28,29, Php 3:3. See [Circumcision of the Heart](#)

#### Galatians 2:8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),

Greek: ho gar energēsas (V-APA-NMS) Petrō eis apostolēn tēs peritomēs enērgēsēn (V-AIA-3S) kai emoi (in me) eis ta ethnē

Amplified: For He Who motivated and fitted Peter and worked effectively through him for the mission to the circumcised, motivated and fitted me and worked through me also for [the mission to] the Gentiles.

Phillips For the God who had done such great work in Peter's ministry for the Jews was plainly doing the same in my ministry for the Gentiles.

Wuest For He who worked effectively for Peter with respect to (his) apostolate to the circumcision, also worked effectively for me with respect to the Gentiles. [Erdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:8 (for he who empowered Peter for his apostleship to the circumcised also empowered me for my apostleship to the Gentiles)

GNT Galatians 2:8 γρ ενεργησας Πτρ ες ποστολν ν τς περιτομς ν ρηρησεν κα μο εστθνη.

NLT Galatians 2:8 For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles.

KJV Galatians 2:8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

ESV Galatians 2:8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

ASV Galatians 2:8 (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles);

CSB Galatians 2:8 since the One at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles.

NIV Galatians 2:8 For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.

NKJ Galatians 2:8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

NRS Galatians 2:8 (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles),

YLT Galatians 2:8 for He who did work with Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, did work also in me in regard to the nations,

NAB Galatians 2:8 for the one who worked in Peter for an apostolate to the circumcised worked also in me for the Gentiles,

NJB Galatians 2:8 (for he who empowered Peter's apostolate to the circumcision also empowered mine to the gentiles),

GWN Galatians 2:8 The one who made Peter an apostle to Jewish people also made me an apostle to people who are not Jewish.

BBE Galatians 2:8 (Because he who was working in Peter as the Apostle of the circumcision was working no less in me among the Gentiles);

- **he** (KJV): Ac 1:8 2:14-41 3:12-26 4:4 5:12-16 8:17
- **the same** (KJV): Ga 3:5 Ac 9:15 13:2-11 14:3-11 15:12 19:11,12,26 21:19 22:21 Ac 26:17,18 1Co 1:5-7 9:2 15:10 2Co 11:4,5 Col 1:29
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ONE MESSAGE TWO DIFFERENT MISSION FIELDS

(for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles) Note the use of the "parenthesis" marks in most of the translations. Paul is saying that it is the same Spirit of God Who energized the work of Peter and himself, to two different mission fields both giving forth the same message.

MacArthur says "The same Holy Spirit (**He**) who energized (**worked**, from [energeo](#), to be at work, to produce results) and empowered **Peter** energized and empowered **Paul**, and the Spirit has but one gospel."

Wuest explains that Gal 2:8 "is a **parenthetical statement**. It confirms the contents of the preceding verse, namely that God delegated to Paul the responsibility of giving the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to Peter, the responsibility of giving the same message to the Jews. Paul's reasoning is as follows. He recognizes without hesitation Peter's apostleship and its divine source. Then he proves that the recognition of his apostleship given by the Jerusalem apostles was merited, because his experience in preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles was equal to and like in character to their efforts among the Jews. He says that God who wrought effectually in Peter's work among the Jews, did the same with reference to his work among the Gentiles. All of which means that both Peter and Paul were recipients of the blessing of God in their work for Him, which is tantamount to saying that He gave recognition to each one as an apostle by divine appointment." ([Galatians Commentary](#))

And continuing Wuest's logic, the implication is that the Gospel of Paul and the Gospel of Peter both effectually worked because they were the very same Gospel independent of ethnicity and not two different Gospels. In addition "it speaks of God's seal of approval resting upon the work of both Peter and Paul, and thus upon their apostleship." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

John Eadie has a similar remark - This parenthetical verse gives the ground of the preceding statement. The same God who wrought effectually for Peter wrought effectually for Paul too; therefore the mission of Paul, divine in its source and sustentation, could not but be recognised....The inworker is God, and that inworking comprehends every element of commission and qualification-outpouring of the Spirit, working of miracles, and all the various endowments and adaptations which fitted both men so fully for their respective spheres. (Acts 15:12).

For (**gar**) is a [term of explanation](#) which should always prompt the simple question "What is being explained?"

**Effectually worked** (energized) ([1754](#)) ([energeo](#) from **en** = in + **érگون** = work. English = *energetic*) means to work effectively to cause something to happen or produce results (in this context bringing about salvation of those who heard them preach the Gospel). In the NT **energeo** is used only of superhuman power.

Gary Hill adds that "energeo ("energizing") generally refers to believers as divinely-energized by the Lord (His Spirit) working in (and through) them (Eph 1:11, 10, Eph 3:20, Php 2:13, Col 1:29, 1Th 2:13, James 5:16). The focus is on the internal transformation of the believer, i.e. God's energy at work in the inner-man." (Discovery Bible)

**God's Spirit supernaturally energized Peter and Paul to work to effectively and efficiently.** Peter and Paul were "[conduits](#)" of the Gospel of grace, respectively to the circumcised Jews and to the uncircumcised Gentiles.

**Conduits** work most effectively when they are empty of obstructing contents. Are you like Peter and Paul, a "conduit" of God's grace allowing the Gospel to flow through your body? What do you need to do to clear our obstructions so that you might redeem the time God has allotted you in this short life (Eph 5:16+)? Let me encourage you (as I need to do to myself) to "lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles (you so that you can)...run with endurance the race that is set before (you)." (Heb 12:1+) And remember is a grace race, not a works race.

**Apostleship** ([651](#)) ([apostole](#) from verb [apostello](#) - from **apo** = from + **stello** = withdraw from; related = [apostolos](#)) means a sending forth, a sending off or away, a dispatching. In secular Greek it was used of an expedition. While not every believer is an apostle in the technical NT sense, every believer is in a real sense "sent forth" from God and privileged to be an ambassador for "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor 5:20) **Are you fulfilling your purpose beloved?** (cp [Eph 2:10+](#))

**Galatians 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

Greek: kai gnontes (V-APA-NMP) charin tēn dotheisan (V-APP-AFS) moi lakōbos kai Kēphas kai Iōannēs hoi dokountes (V-PAP) styloi einai (V-PNA) dexias edōkan emoi kai Barnaba koinōnias hina hēmeis (we [should go]) eis ta ethnē autoi de eis tēn peritomēn

Amplified: And when they knew (perceived, recognized, understood, and acknowledged) the grace (God's unmerited favor and spiritual blessing) that had been bestowed upon me, James and Cephas (Peter) and John, who were reputed to be pillars of the Jerusalem church, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, with the understanding that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Jews).

John Eadie And coming to the knowledge of the grace which was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who are reputed pillars, gave to me and Barnabas right hands of fellowship; that we should go or preach to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision.

Phillips When, therefore, James, Peter and John (who were the recognised "pillars" of the church there) saw how God had given me his grace, they held out to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, in full agreement that our mission was to the Gentiles and theirs to the Jews.

Wuest And having come to perceive the grace which was given to me, James, and Kephias, and John, those who in reputation were looked upon as pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, to the end that we should preach the gospel to the Gentiles and they themselves to the circumcision. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who had a reputation as pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

GNT Galatians 2:9 καὶ γινώσκοντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, κίβδος καὶ Κηφῆς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκούντες στῆλοι εἶναι, δεξίαν ἔδωκαν μοι καὶ Βαρνάβῳ κοινωνίας, ἵνα μερῶς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομὴν.

NLT Galatians 2:9 In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews.

KJV Galatians 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

ESV Galatians 2:9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

ASV Galatians 2:9 and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcised;

CSB Galatians 2:9 When James, Cephas, and John, recognized as pillars, acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

NIV Galatians 2:9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

NKJ Galatians 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

NRS Galatians 2:9 and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

YLT Galatians 2:9 and having known the grace that was given to me, James, and Cephas, and John, who were esteemed to be pillars, a right hand of fellowship they did give to me, and to Barnabas, that we to the nations, and they to the circumcision may go,

NAB Galatians 2:9 and when they recognized the grace bestowed upon me, James and Kephias and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas their right hands in partnership, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

NJB Galatians 2:9 and when they acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, then James and Cephas and John, who were the ones recognised as pillars, offered their right hands to Barnabas and to me as a sign of partnership: we were to go to the gentiles and they to the circumcised.

GWN Galatians 2:9 James, Cephas, and John (who were recognized as the most important people) acknowledged that God had given me this special gift. So they shook hands with Barnabas and me, agreeing to be our partners. It was understood that we would work among the people who are not Jewish and they would work among Jewish people.

BBE Galatians 2:9 When they saw the grace which was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who had the name of being pillars, gave to me and Barnabas their right hands as friends so that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision;

- recognizing the grace that had been given to me: Ro 1:5 Ro 12:3,5,6 Ro 15:15 1Co 15:10 Eph 3:8 Col 1:29 1Pe 4:10,11
- James and Cephas and John: Ac 15:7,13,22-29
- who were reputed to be pillars: Ga 2:2,6,12-14 Mt 16:18 Eph 2:20 Rev 3:12 21:14-20
- gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship: 2Co 8:4 1Jn 1:3
- so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised Ac 15:23-30
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PILLARS OF FAITH IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH PAUL

**And recognizing the grace that had been given to me** - That the good hand of the Lord was on Paul was clear to these pillars of the Church. So here we see Paul was doctrinal harmony (**the grace that had been given**) with these pillars and then he says they were in personal harmony with him (**right hand of fellowship**). In sum we see their oneness in Christ, reminiscent of Paul's words about unity in Ephesians exhorting the believers to be...

diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:3-6<sup>+</sup>)

**MacArthur** adds "There is only one gospel, and those five men (who wrote 21 of the 27 New Testament books) demonstrate that truth."

**Lovett** points out: RIGHT HANDS. What a moment in Gospel history! James, Peter, John and Paul stand with hands clasped in official fellowship. The other apostles give full sanction to Paul's ministry, acknowledging his commission, received by revelation, to be identical with the one they received from Jesus in Person. Can you picture those four writers of most of the N.T. standing there in such perfect accord! The clasping of hands signifies compactual agreement in receiving Paul into the apostleship. ([Lovett's lights on Galatians Through II Thess](#))

**Recognizing** ("when they perceived and acknowledged" - Amp) ([1097](#))([qinosko](#)) means to come to know by experience. The pillars had themselves experienced that grace which was sufficient to save through faith and that this grace needed no "addendum" for it to be [efficacious](#)!

Paul summarizes this **grace** given to him - "But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but **the grace** of God with ([sun/syn](#) - speaks of intimate interrelationship) me." (1 Cor 15:10<sup>+</sup>)

**Ridderbos** says "The **grace** comprises in one word what has been said in verses 7 and 8, that is, the ministry of the gospel and the divine power manifesting itself in this ministry, qualified, both of them, as an undeserved gift."

**Grace** (favor) ([5485](#))([charis](#)) which John Eadie explains as "that goodwill on God's part which not only provides and applies salvation, but blesses, cheers, and assists believers." **Grace** is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement for salvation the first time and for salvation daily, i.e., daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32<sup>+</sup> where "freely give" is [charizomai](#) from **charis** = a grace gift!)

**John Piper** - "Grace is not simply leniency when we have sinned. **Grace** is the enabling gift of God not to sin. **Grace** is power, not just pardon."

The **grace of God** is described as... **Glorious** (Ep 1:6<sup>+</sup>) **Abundant** (Acts 4:33<sup>+</sup>) **Rich** (Ep 1:7<sup>+</sup>) **Manifold** (many-sided, multi-colored, variegated) (1Pe 4:10<sup>+</sup>) **Sufficient** (sufficing, enough, adequate - there is never a shortage) (2Cor 12:9<sup>+</sup>)

**James and Cephas and John** - James, Cephas, and John are the subjects in Galatians 2:6-10 and in this passage they are specifically named.

**Wuest** has an interesting comment - **James** is mentioned first by Paul, and for four possible reasons. First, Paul showed his respect to the mother-church at Jerusalem and its highly esteemed leader. Second, this James was the brother of our Lord. Third, he had presided at the Council. Fourth, his well-known strictness as to the observance of the Mosaic law gave special weight to his support of Gentile freedom from the law. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**Who were reputed to be pillars** - **Pillar** literally refers to a tall vertical cylindrical structure standing upright and used to support a structure. A pillar is a firm upright support for a superstructure. These men were pillars of the "superstructure" of "the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24<sup>+</sup>). **Pillar** was used figuratively in Classical Greek in the same sense as Paul uses it in this passage, to refer to their stabilizing character.

**MacArthur** adds **pillars** was "a Jewish term used to refer to great teachers. As already mentioned, the somewhat sarcastic reference does not reflect against these men but against the Judaizers. Because those false teachers apparently used the term **pillars** (emphasizing their role in establishing and supporting the church) when referring to the three Jerusalem leaders, Paul throws the term back in their faces. He demonstrates to them and to the Galatian believers they were trying to turn against him that he was in perfect doctrinal harmony with those **three pillars** and with all the other apostles and elders at Jerusalem."

**Spurgeon** - Paul says that James and Cephas and John seemed to be pillars; that is to say, they were upholders of the good cause.

**Gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship** - Don't miss the picture Paul is painting! Five men joined hands apparently in front of all - Peter, James John, Paul and Barnabas. It is a dramatic conclusion to their pact for cooperation in independent spheres of ministry. The Judaizers were put out of the picture and Christianity was firmly distinguished from Judaism. **Gaebelein** says "This confirmation of Paul and the gospel he preached was a complete answer to the false claims and accusations of the enemies of the apostle."

**Gave...the right hand** - An idiom meaning make an agreement usually with shaking of hands. The was a clear sign to all who were present that the pillars of the Church fully endorsed God's work in and through Paul.

"In the Near East, to clasp **the right hand** of a person was to make a solemn vow of friendship and was a mark of **fellowship**, or partnership." (MacArthur) This action also can include the sense of making a covenant. By way of application the good hand of the LORD has been extended to all believers and we have "clasp hands" (see "Striking of hands" in covenant), as it were, with God when we entered into His New Covenant of Grace. (See picture of striking hands) In this case it was not just a shaking of hands but a sharing of mission and purpose, the proclamation of the Gospel to all mankind.

### [Blest Be the Tie That Binds](#)

John Fawcett

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one  
Our comforts and our cares.

**Wuest** on **gave...the right hand of fellowship** - The custom of giving the hand as a pledge of friendship or agreement has been found among both the Hebrews and the Greeks. It was probably derived by the Hebrews from some outside source. The custom appears as early as Homer. It is found in an inscription from Pergamum (98 B.C.), where the people of that city offer to adjust the strife between Sardis and Ephesus and send a mediator to give hands for a treaty. The custom is found among the Persians. Images of right hands clasped were often exchanged in token of friendship. An extract from Tacitus says, "The state of the Lingones had sent, according to an ancient institution, right hands, as gifts to the legions, a signal of good will." On Roman coins there often is seen two hands joined, with various inscriptions speaking of concord and agreement. The details of the compact are found in the words "that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." The agreement therefore was that Paul and Barnabas should go as apostles to the Gentiles, and the Jerusalem apostles were to go as apostles to the Jews, both groups taking the same Gospel. The state of things which existed hitherto remained undisturbed. **Two nationally different spheres were to be evangelized with one and the same message**. But the agreement was more than this. **It was an acknowledgment of apostolic equality**. Paul would not be content with the mere approbation of the Twelve upon his missionary labors. He needed to show the Galatians that he was an apostle equal in rank to the apostles at Jerusalem. In addition to that, he deemed it necessary to show them that his contention for Gentile freedom from the obligation of circumcision was sustained in the Jerusalem council. However, this mutual understanding did not forbid Paul to minister to the Jews on occasion or

prevent Peter from ministering to the Gentiles should the opportunity arise. Paul began his ministry in each new place by preaching to the Jews (Acts 13:5, 14, 14:1, 17:1-3, Acts 18:4, Acts 19:8). Peter preached to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), and ministered at the Gentile church in Syrian Antioch. ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**To me and Barnabas** - Titus not mentioned here supporting the premise that he was not a leader but had come as an example of God's grace given to Gentiles.

**Wuest** points out the significance of their clasping hands - The word **koinonia** defines the compact recognized and sealed by the right hands of fellowship as a partnership, in this case, a partnership in the preaching of the same Gospel. It was a mutual alliance, for Paul and Barnabas grasped the **proffered** hands of James, Cephas, and John. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

**Fellowship** (partnership)(2842)(**koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common, belonging to several) describes the experience of having something in common and/or of sharing things in common with others. It describes a close association involving mutual interests and sharing or to have communion (Which Webster defines as "intimate fellowship"). **Koinonia** denotes the active, joint participation, cooperation and/or sharing in a common interest or activity. So clearly in this context Paul and the "pillars" share a mutual interest in the integrity and propagation of the Gospel.

**McGee** adds that **koinonia**, one of the great words of the gospel and the highest expression of a personal relationship. It means sharing the things of Christ."

**Swindoll** sums up this last section writing that "On that epochal day, rather than being scolded in front of their opponents, put in their places, and then sent back to Antioch stripped of their ministry, Paul and Barnabas received a threefold endorsement. First, the apostolic leaders saw Paul's distinctive contribution to the work of the ministry. They realized that Paul and Barnabas represented not a competing message but a complementary ministry (Gal 2:7). Peter had been sent to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles. Second, they put Paul's ministry on par with Peter's. The church leaders saw that although Peter and Paul had different ministries, their empowerment and authority came from the same source—God (Gal 2:8). Because both ministries had clear evidence of God's miraculous confirmation, it was clear that God had shown favor to each of them. The only solution was to view the situation from God's perspective: Paul and Peter represented unity and diversity in the body of Christ. Third, they recognized the grace given to Paul and encouraged him to press on. Seeing that Paul had the gifts, skills, training, and experience to minister to the Gentiles, the apostles urged him to keep at his God-given task (Gal 2:9). ([Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**So that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised** - **So that** (**hina**) introduces another purpose clause. What's the purpose? The Gospel would go via Paul to the Gentiles and via the "pillars" to the Jews. It reminds me of the old adage "Divide and conquer!"

**Gentiles** ("heathen" KJV, "nations" YLT) (1484)(**ethnos** gives us our word *ethnic*) generally refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). **Eadie** says **ethnos** "is used in its broad sense, of all the nations beyond Palestine, as nations in want of a free and unlogged offer of the gospel."

**The circumcised** (4061)(**peritome**) in this context is used figuratively as a description of the Jews. **Eadie** asks "Are not the Jews so named here on purpose, as if the reference were not only to the covenant rite, but also to what had been the theme of dissension at Antioch and the subject of present consultation in Jerusalem?"

**David Guzik** comments that "These distinctions were not absolute; each did minister to the other groups." "For the partition was not one that fixed hard and fast boundaries that they must not pass, like those of kingdoms, principalities, and provinces." (Calvin) Yet, the distinction is interesting, especially because Roman Catholics claim that the Pope is the successor of Peter—but where through history is the Pope's ministry to the Jews? "But if Peter's apostleship pertained peculiarly to the Jews, let the Romanists ask by what right they derive from him their succession to the primacy. If the Pope of Rome claims the primacy because he is Peter's successor, he ought to exercise it over the Jews. Paul is here declared to be the chief apostle of the Gentiles; yet they deny that he was the bishop of Rome. Therefore, if the Pope would enter into the possession of his primacy, let him assemble Churches from the Jews." (Calvin)

### Selywn Hughes - Touching the Intangible

When James, Cephas, and John ... acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.—GALATIANS 2:9

Truly, in making an effort to go outside of ourselves and relate to others, we receive a wider awareness and a deeper understanding of God. This has been one of the greatest and most exciting discoveries of my life. The more I have given myself to my brothers and sisters in Christ, the greater has been my awareness and understanding of God. I am not saying that in order to know God, we first have to get to know each other. That would be blatant error. We can know about Him through such means as creation, providence, and so on, but we can only know Him through His Son Jesus Christ. "No one has ever seen God. The One and Only Son—the One who is at the Father's side—He has revealed Him" (Jn 1:18). However, once we know Him in this way, our fellowship with Him and our understanding of Him can be deepened by our relationship with others who know Him. How does this work? The more I have focused on learning to listen—really listen—to my brothers and sisters in Christ, the more I have found that the effort I have made to do this has resulted in a heightening of my ability to listen to God. And the more I have sought to understand the mystery of His dealings in their lives, the more I have come to know the depth and beauty of His character. Although down the years I have come to know Him intimately in prayer, I believe I can say that I know Him even better because I have met Him in others.

O Father, how can I sufficiently thank You for the fellowship we have with one another in Christ. In the tangible I see the Intangible, and through the visible I see the Invisible. I am eternally grateful. Amen.

Further Study : Jn 14:20; Gl 2:1-20; Col 1:27; 1Jn 3:24 How does God make His riches known? Are those riches being made known to others through you?

### Galatians 2:10 They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

Greek: monon tōn pōtōn hina mnēmoneuōmen (V-PSA-1P) ho kai espoudasa auto touto poiēsai (V-ANA)

Amplified: They only [made one stipulation], that we were to remember the poor, which very thing I was also eager to do.

the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Phillips The only suggestion they made was that we should not forget the poor - and with this I was, of course, only too ready to agree

Wuest Only that we should keep on remembering the poor, which very thing I have made a diligent and eager effort to do. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:10 They requested only that we remember the poor, the very thing I also was eager to do.

GNT Galatians 2:10 μ ο ν τ η ν π τ ω χ η ν ν α μ ν η μ ο ν ε ω μ ε ν , κ α ι σ π ο δ α σ α α υ τ ο τ ο π ο ι η σ α ι .

NLT Galatians 2:10 Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do.

KJV Galatians 2:10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

ESV Galatians 2:10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

ASV Galatians 2:10 only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.

CSB Galatians 2:10 They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I made every effort to do.

NIV Galatians 2:10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

NKJ Galatians 2:10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

NRS Galatians 2:10 They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

YLT Galatians 2:10 only, of the poor that we should be mindful, which also I was diligent -- this very thing -- to do.

NAB Galatians 2:10 Only, we were to be mindful of the poor, which is the very thing I was eager to do.

NJB Galatians 2:10 They asked nothing more than that we should remember to help the poor, as indeed I was anxious to do in any case.

GWN Galatians 2:10 The only thing they asked us to do was to remember the poor, the very thing which I was eager to do.

BBE Galatians 2:10 Only it was their desire that we would give thought to the poor; which very thing I had much in mind to do.

- **that** (KJV): Acts 11:29,30 Acts 24:17 Ro 15:25-27 1Co 16:1,2 2Co 8:1-9:15 Heb 13:16 Jas 2:15,16 1Jn 3:17
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE ONLY STIPULATION: REMEMBER THE POOR

**They only asked us to remember the poor** - They of course is James, Cephas, John. **Amplified** - "They only [made one stipulation], that we were to remember the poor." In this case, these were probably the poor saints in Jerusalem, whom Gentile believers should not forget.

**Remember** (recall, bearing in mind) (3421)(**mnemoneuo** from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means to exercise memory, call something to mind, recollect.

**Wuest** - "This is not a request added to the agreement, but a part of the agreement itself. Remember is from **mnemoneuo**. This is the only instance in the New Testament where this word means "to remember" in the sense of "benefit or care for." The force of the tense (**present tense**) and mode of the verb (**subjunctive mood**) causes us to translate, "that we should keep on remembering the poor." Paul and Barnabas had done this before when they brought relief to the poor at Jerusalem on a previous occasion (Acts 11:27-30). Judaea often suffered from famine, and the Christians there were perhaps the worst sufferers because of the ill-will and persecution which came from the unsaved Jews. This passage implies that there was a state of chronic poverty there, as does Paul's efforts in collecting money on his missionary journeys. He was not attempting to meet an emergency, since it took more than a year to collect the fund, the latter being organized to meet a permanent demand for continuous help." ([Galatians Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - To take care of the poor is not only a practical but a spiritual responsibility, because to forsake that responsibility is to disobey God's Word. "Whoever has this world's goods," John declares, "and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). James says that it is a sham believer who says to "a brother or sister... without clothing and in need of daily food,... 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet [does] not give them what is necessary for their body" (James 2:15-16; cf. Ex. 23:10-11; 30:15; Lev. 19:10; Deut. 15:7-11; Jer. 22:16; Amos 2:6-7; Luke 6:36, 38; 2 Cor. 8-9).

A number of passages attest to Paul's work among the poor -

Acts 11:29; 30 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. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

Acts 24:17 "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings;

Romans 15:25-27 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

**Poor** (4434)(**ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe) is an adjective describing one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others or on society. Paul uses **ptochos** once more in this letter as an adjective in Gal. 4:9, asking "how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless (ptochos - "beggarily" - KJV) elemental things" to refer metaphorically to the poverty-stricken religion of the Jews which is powerless to spiritually enrich a person. The use of **ptochos** in Classical Greek referred to a person reduced to total destitution, crouching in a corner begging. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized.

The OT is replete with examples of God's heart toward the **poor** as in Deut 15:7-8...

"If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.

**Ironside** says: Verse 10 is interesting: "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do." I wonder whether Paul did not smile as he heard that. They said, "You go to the Gentiles, Paul, but don't forget there are many poor saints here in Judea, and although you do not preach among us, send us a collection from time to time." He did, and thus showed that it was one Body and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling.

**Donald Campbell** - It had been concern for the poor which brought Paul to Jerusalem in order to bring them financial relief . . . It was the same concern which motivated him on his third missionary journey to raise large welfare offerings for needy Christians in Jerusalem . . . Such offerings would alleviate human suffering, but they would also demonstrate genuine concern on the part of Gentile Christians for Jewish Christians. This in turn would help promote unity and love among believers and help prevent the kinds of misunderstandings which were undermining the Galatian churches. (BKC)

**The very thing I also was eager to do** - Wuest - "very thing I have made a diligent and eager effort to do." Paul certainly did remember the poor in Jerusalem. He put a lot of effort towards gathering a contribution among the Gentile churches for the sake of the saints in Jerusalem. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

Paul alludes to his his eagerness in his first letter to the saints (mainly Gentiles) at Corinth...

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also....3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem:(1 Corinthians 16:1, 3, read also 2Co 8:1-9:15)

**Eager** (4704)(**spoudazo** from **spoude** = haste) conveys the idea of hastening to do something with the implication of associated energy or with intense effort and motivation. **Spoudazo** speaks of intensity of purpose followed by intensity of effort and concentration toward the realization of that purpose. **Spoudazo** is used in the papyri in such senses as "do your best, take care, hurry on the doing of something." **Wuest** adds that **spoudazo** "does not refer merely to the apostle's state of mind, but to his activity in relieving the necessities of the poor saint at Jerusalem." ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

**Spurgeon** - One reason God has a poor people is so that He may display more the power of His comforting promises and the supports of the gospel. "There," says the architect, "this building is strong." Yes, but it must be tested: Let the wind blow against it. There is a lighthouse out at sea, but it is a calm night—I cannot tell whether the edifice is firm. The tempest must howl about it, and then I shall know whether it will stand. So with religion: If it were not on many occasions surrounded with tempestuous waters, we would not know that the ship was staunch and strong; if the winds did not blow upon it, as they do on our poor tried brothers, we should not know how firm and secure it is. The masterworks of God are those that stand in the midst of difficulties. When all things oppose them, yet they maintain their stand, these are His all-glorious works. So His best children, those who honor Him most, are those who have grace to sustain them amidst the heaviest load of tribulations and trials. God puts His people into such circumstances, then, to show us the power of His grace.

See Spurgeon's sermon - [Galatians 2:10: The Duty of Remembering the Poor](#)

## Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Greek: Hote de êlthen (V-AIA-3S) Kêphas eis Antiocheian kata prosôpon autô antestên (V-AIA-1S) hoti kategnôsmenos (V-RPM/P-NMS) ên (V-IIA-3S)

Amplified: But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I protested and opposed him to his face [concerning his conduct there], for he was blameable and stood condemned.

Phillips Later, however, when Peter came to Antioch I had to oppose him publicly, for he was then plainly in the wrong. It happened like this.

Wuest But when Kephass came to Antioch, to his face I opposed him, because he stood condemned. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

NET Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he had clearly done wrong.

GNT Galatians 2:11 τὸ δὲ ἄθεν Κηφῆς ἐξ ἑστῆς χειρῶν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἔστην, τὸ κατεγνωσμένον ἔν.

NLT Galatians 2:11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong.

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

ESV Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

ASV Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.

CSB Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.

NIV Galatians 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.

NKJ Galatians 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

NRS Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned;

YLT Galatians 2:11 And when Peter came to Antioch, to the face I stood up against him, because he was blameworthy,

NAB Galatians 2:11 And when Kephass came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong.

NJB Galatians 2:11 However, when Cephas came to Antioch, then I did oppose him to his face since he was manifestly in the wrong.

GWN Galatians 2:11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I had to openly oppose him because he was completely wrong.

BBE Galatians 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I made a protest against him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.

- to Antioch: Ac 15:30-35
- I withstood (KJV): Ga 2:5 2Co 5:16 11:5,21-28 12:11 1Ti 5:20 Jude 1:3
- because (KJV): Ex 32:21,22 Nu 20:12 Jer 1:17 Jon 1:3 4:3,4,9 Mt 16:17,18,23 Ac 15:37-39 23:1-5 Jas 3:2 1Jn 1:8-10
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL REBUKES PETER'S "RELAPSE"

**MacArthur** notes that "Paul continues the defense of his apostolic credentials by reporting his exercise of authority on one occasion even over Peter, whom most believers in the early church consider to be the preeminent apostle. And Paul did not hesitate to correct him when he was out of line with the truth."

**Machen** says: Now, in Gal. 2:11-21, Paul presents the third and last of his arguments for his apostolic independence. So independent was he, he says, that on one occasion he could even oppose the chief of the original apostles himself. ([NOTES ON GALATIANS](#))

**Kenneth Wuest** gives an excellent background to help understand Galatians 2:11-21 which some have titled "When Leaders Collide" -

Paul opens the question as to whether the Jew himself is still bound by the Mosaic law. In the Jerusalem council, the question was as to whether the rite of circumcision should be required of the Gentiles. The particular Mosaic legislation to which Paul had reference here and which he presented as a test case before the Galatians, had to do with the Levitical legislation regarding the eating of certain foods. While one purpose of the giving of this legislation permitting the eating of certain foods and the prohibition regarding other foods, was a dietary one to promote the physical well-being of the Jews, yet another was that of keeping the Jews a separate people from the Gentiles, thus preserving clean the channel which God was using to bring salvation to the earth. The forbidden foods were found on the tables of the Gentiles. Hence a Jew could never accept a dinner invitation of a Gentile. This was one of the factors which kept the nation Israel apart from the Gentile world.

**God had made clear to Peter that this legislation was set aside at the Cross, by the vision He gave him while he was on the housetop of Simon the tanner (Acts 10:9-16+), with the result that Peter was willing to go to the home of (GENTILE) Cornelius (Acts 10:24-48+).** This occurred before the incident to which Paul refers in these verses. When Peter came to Antioch, he saw Jews and Gentiles eating together (THIS IS NOT DESCRIBED IN ACTS, ONLY HERE BY PAUL), and joined their fellowship. When certain Jews from the Jerusalem church came as representatives of James, and saw Peter eating with the Gentiles, **they contended that he was going against Levitical legislation. They brought pressure to bear upon Peter, and he discontinued his practice of eating with the Gentiles. This caused the Jews in the church at Antioch to cease eating with the Gentiles, and brought about a division in the church.** Paul, in resisting Peter, thus showed that he not only refused to take orders from the Jerusalem apostles, but on the other hand felt that his apostolic position gave him the right to stand openly against them in matters of wrong conduct. In no way could he have better demonstrated his independence as an apostle." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**MacArthur** adds that "Because the Judaizers had told believers in the Galatian churches that Paul was not a true apostle, the incident mentioned in this verse is especially significant. Paul not only was equal to the other apostles but had on this occasion even reprimanded Peter (**Cephas**), the one who was recognizably the leading apostle among the Twelve."

**Hansen** has an interesting comment that "Some early church leaders (Origen, Chrysostom and Jerome) could not believe that this conflict really occurred. They explained that Paul and Peter must have staged the conflict to illustrate the issues at stake. Augustine, however, interpreted the story as a genuine conflict in which Paul established the higher claim of the truth of the gospel over the rank and office of Peter. Augustine was right."

**But** - Introduces Paul's new argument in Galatians 2:11-21. Paul has just recounted with regard to their unity and the extension of the "right hand of fellowship" to him and Barnabas and their ministry. Now it's as if Peter does an **"about face"** which caused Paul to stand against him **face-to-face!**

**Don Anderson** - We just left them in JERUSALEM UNIFIED and now in ANTIOCH THERE IS CONFLICT. Paul goes to Jerusalem and in their CREED they are UNIFIED. Peter goes to Antioch and in their CONDUCT they are DIVIDED. They joined their hands singing "Blest be the Tie that Binds" in our last study and now there is conflict between them. In Jerusalem Paul looked on Peter as his equal in rank and sphere of work, but in Antioch he was his superior in character and courage. ([Notes](#))

**Swindoll** - So, what motivated Paul to report his conflict with Peter to the troubled churches in Galatia? The key to answering the question comes from one small word: **but**. In the previous section, Paul described how the leaders of the Jerusalem church—including Peter—had agreed with him and Barnabas regarding the test case of Titus. Nobody required Titus, a Gentile convert to Christianity, to follow the Law—neither in order to become a Christian nor to live the Christian life. The Law contributes nothing to a person's salvation, and it adds nothing to a person's sanctification. Peter and Paul saw eye to eye on that issue. **But** when Peter arrived in Antioch some time later, his actions openly contradicted his doctrine! ([Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Galatians, Ephesians](#))

**Vine** makes an interesting observation that "if the incident about to be related took place after the Council at Jerusalem at all, it must have taken place immediately after it, for Paul and Barnabas separated soon after their return to Antioch, as recorded in Acts 15. 36-40, and were never together again."

**But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned- Amplified** - "When Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I protested and opposed him to his face [concerning his conduct there]." Paul did not defer to Peter even though he had been appointed an apostle before he had been (Gal 1:17+). And he did not shrink back from public confrontation of one who he himself had called a **pillar** of the church (Gal 2:9+). Paul will explain in Galatians 2:12-13 why he **stood condemned**.

**John Stott** - He (PAUL) made no attempt to hush the dispute up or arrange (as we might) for a private discussion from which the public or the press were excluded. The consultation in Jerusalem had been private (Gal 2:2), but the showdown in Antioch must be public. Peter's withdrawal from the Gentile believers had caused a public scandal; he had to be opposed in public too. So Paul's opposition to Peter was both 'to his face' (Gal 2:11) and 'before them all' (Gal 2:14). It was just the kind of open head-on collision which the church would seek at any price to avoid today. (Message of Galatians)

## PETER "CALLED ON THE CARPET"

The American idiom **"called on the carpet"** means "to reprimand someone, to be summoned before one's boss or other superior in order to be criticized, scolded or blamed for some sort of mistake or infraction." ([See more lengthy explanation](#))

**I opposed him to his face** - This is a strong verb and is used to describe an army in battle array against the enemy! Opposed is literally "stood against" giving us a picture of Paul as we might say today "in Peter's face," not rudely but boldly, openly and as an equal. Paul vigorously opposing incipient error, resisting the temptation to compromise with Jews sent from Jerusalem by James and instead exhibiting a willingness to stand face-to-face against Peter, not giving one inch on the truth of the Gospel which is impartial to ethnicity! So what were the effects of this tense face-to-face confrontation between two Christian leaders? (1) The integrity of the Gospel was defended. (2) Paul demonstrated he was an independent apostle and (3) not only was he independent, but he was also equal to Peter in authority.

**Spurgeon** - It must have been very painful to Paul's feelings to come into conflict with Peter, whom he greatly esteemed; but yet, for the truth's sake, he knew no persons, and he had to withstand even a beloved brother when he saw that he was likely to pervert the simplicity of the gospel, and rob the Gentiles of their Christian liberty. For this, we ought to be very grateful to our gracious God who raised up this brave champion, this beloved apostle of the Gentiles.

**Boice** - In the opening part of this chapter, Paul has demonstrated his essential unity with those who were apostles before him. Now he shows that he stood so firmly grounded in the Gospel that he opposed even Peter, contradicting him publicly when Peter's conduct at Antioch threatened to compromise that Gospel. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**I opposed (436) (antihistemi)** from **anti** = against + **histemi** = to cause to stand) is literally to stand or set against. To set one's self against. **Antihistemi** gives us a vivid picture of this apostolic confrontation for the verb was used in secular Greek to describe an army in battle array against the enemy, thus depicting a **face to face** ("to his face" - prosopon) confrontation. This verb usually implies that the initial attack came from the other side. It was Peter, in Paul's mind, who was the aggressor.

**Antihistemi** is used repeatedly in the context of **spiritual warfare** - Acts 13:8 = "Elymas the magician...was **opposing**" Barnabas and Saul; Eph 6:13 = "take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **resist** in the evil day." 2 Ti 3:8 "these men (2 Ti 3:5-7 describes them) **oppose** the truth." 2 Ti 4:15 = "he (Alexander the coppersmith 2 Ti 4:14) **vigorously opposed** our teaching." James 4:7 = "**Resist** the devil and he will flee from you." and 1 Peter 5:9 "resist him (devil - 1 Pe 5:8), firm in your faith." Indeed was there not "**spiritual warfare**" in Antioch on this fateful day? Notice how the effect was to cause DIVISION, one of the devil's primary modus operandi! It is also interesting that the verb **antihistemi** gives rise to our pharmacological term **antihistamine** which blocks the effect of **histamine** which causes blood vessels to dilate.

**When Cephas came to Antioch** - We do not know the timing of this visit, as it is not described elsewhere in Scripture. Some think it was after the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, but we cannot be dogmatic.

**Antioch (location and city schematic, Map of the City in Paul's day, Hastings Bible Dictionary, Wikipedia)** About 20 miles from the Mediterranean, the Orontes, turning abruptly westward, enters a fertile plain, 10 miles long and 5 wide, which separates the great Lebanon range from the last spurs of the Taurus. Antioch is the site of the missionary sending church that sent out Paul and Barnabas (and John Mark). - 16 mentions, most in Acts - Acts 6:5; 11:19, 20, 22, 26, 27; 13:1, 14; 14:26; 15:22, 23, 30, 35; 18:22; Gal. 2:11.

**Wuest** has an interesting comment noting that **antihistemi** "usually implies that the initial attack came from the other side. It was Peter, in Paul's mind, who was the aggressor. Although not intentional, yet in effect it was an attack on the position which Paul was maintaining at Antioch." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Stood condemned** - Of course this had nothing to do with Peter's salvation which was secure even as Paul wrote in Ro 8:1+. **Condemned** is in the **perfect tense** speaking of the permanent effect of this condemnation. Before whom did Peter stand **condemned**? Some say he was **condemned** here by his own contradictory actions (Lightfoot) or by his own conscience. The NRS version in fact renders this passage as he was "self-condemned." The NIV has "because he was clearly in the wrong." Phillips paraphrases it "for he was then plainly in the wrong." Some say Peter was **condemned** by the Christians at Antioch.

**MacArthur** on **stood condemned** - Peter was not **condemned** in the sense of losing his salvation but in the sense of being guilty of sin by taking a position he knew was wrong. He no doubt also **stood condemned** as a sinner in the eyes of the Gentile believers in Antioch, who, because they were well-grounded in the gospel of grace, were perplexed and deeply hurt by his ostracism of them.

**Stott** on **stood condemned** - "That is to say, 'he was clearly in the wrong' (NEB). Not only so, but Paul rebuked Peter 'before them all' (Gal 2:14), openly and publicly."

**Machen** says "It is not necessary to ask by whom Peter "was condemned"; Paul means that his very act condemned him. When he says that he "was condemned," that is only a more forcible way of saying that he was worthy of condemnation. ([NOTES ON GALATIANS](#))

**Condemned** (2607) ([kataginosko](#) from [katá](#) = against + [ginosko](#) = know) literally means to know against (to know something against one) and then to find fault with, blame or condemn. **Vine** notes that [kataginosko](#) "is used in 1 John 3:20, 21, of the effect of an exercised and enlightened conscience. This is apparently the meaning here, with the further thought, involved in the continuous tense, that the inconsistency of Peter's conduct was plain not only to himself, but to everybody else."

**THOUGHT-** Before we criticize Peter, perhaps we had better examine our own lives to see how many familiar Bible doctrines we are actually obeying. As you examine church history, you see that, even with a complete Bible, believers through the years have been slow to believe and practice the truths of the Christian faith. When we think of the persecution and discrimination that have been practiced in the name of Christ, it embarrasses us. It is one thing for us to defend a doctrine in a church meeting, and quite something else to put it into practice in everyday life. (Wiersbe)

It is notable that no response is recorded from Peter. He stood condemned!

**Lenski** adds "We see why Peter made no defense. It would have been preposterous for him to make even the attempt. To deny or to contradict the finding of the conference would have included a denial of the central part of the gospel. Peter was erring. But his greatness is evident: he accepted public rebuke in all humility, he mended his ways. How many men, high in the church, have done the same when they were in the wrong?"

---

**J C Ryle** - There are three great lessons from Antioch, which I think we ought to learn from this passage.

- I. The first lesson is, "That great ministers may make great mistakes."
- II. The second is, "That to keep the *truth* of Christ in His Church is even more important than to keep *peace*."
- III. The third is, "That there is no doctrine about which we ought to be so protective about, as *justification by faith* without the deeds of the law." (For expansion of each point see [Gal 2:11-21 - The Fallability of Ministers](#))

---

#### Galatians 2:11-13 TODAY IN THE WORD

Those who don't practice what they preach are hypocrites, perhaps none more so than those who preach God's Word.

Yet according to a newsletter of the Global Evangelization Movement, ecclesiastical crime is on the rise. From a tab of just \$300 at the start of this century, and only \$5 million in 1970, the loss is expected to top \$13 billion by the year 2000. As the newsletter's editor points out, that will exceed the total spent for global foreign missions!

Ministers stealing? What a shocking inconsistency between words and actions! A similar situation of inconsistency developed in Antioch, and it led to Peter's being guilty of hypocrisy.

After the Jerusalem Council, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. Great rejoicing occurred there over the council's decision (found in Acts 15:19-20). Gentiles were not under law but were expected to avoid certain pagan religious and social practices for the sake of their Christian testimony.

For a while all went well in Antioch. Such great love sprang up between Jewish and Gentile believers that they ate the agape-feast, or love-feast, together. This practice was an emblem of Christian unity, and the interruption of it was sure to harm the church. An outbreak of division in the church, contributed to by Peter, therefore drew fire from Paul (v. 11). He opposed Peter openly, the only way to clearly support the principle of Christian liberty.

What had happened? As a result of a visit by Jews from the Jerusalem church, pressure was exerted on Jews in Antioch not to eat with Gentiles, but to be more scrupulous about law-keeping. Peter, who had taken such a forceful stand for Jewish fellowship with Gentiles (Acts 11:1-18), buckled under social pressure (Gal. 2:12). When Peter capitulated, other Jews found it hard to stand against the tide. Even Barnabas ultimately fell before the social pressure (v. 13).

#### APPLY THE WORD

Even a great apostle like Peter was not immune from the disease of hypocrisy (v. 13). What about us? Throughout the Gospels, Christ had harsh words for hypocrites. Hypocrisy or inconsistency hurts our witness for Him, which is why Paul had to confront Peter about his behavior. If Peter fell prey to this sin, we certainly can fall prey to it as well!

---

#### Galatians 2:11-14 TODAY IN THE WORD

I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel. - Galatians 2:14

The Help, a novel by Kathryn Stockett, tells the story of African American maids who worked for wealthy white families in Jackson, Mississippi, in the 1960s. One of the white women decides to push for a "Home Help Sanitation Initiative" that would require a toilet in the garage for use by the help. After all, she reasoned, no one should have to share a bathroom with blacks.

This racial segregation resembled the strict segregation between Jews and Gentiles as commanded by the Jewish law. But this separation was being overthrown in light of the gospel. In Acts 10, Peter had received a vision from God where all foods were declared clean by God. This vision preceded a providential introduction to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, who converted to faith in Jesus. Peter was strongly criticized for having eaten with Cornelius (a Gentile), but Peter testified to the work of the Spirit in Cornelius and his household.

What Peter learned during his visit with Cornelius, he seemed willing to put aside when confronted by certain Judaizers. At Antioch, he refused to eat with Gentile believers. Even worse, this decision was really cowardice, motivated by fear of what the advocates for circumcision would say about him.

The church at Antioch was the first of its kind: thoroughly Gentile and Christian. It was the first place in fact where followers of Jesus were called "Christians." When Jewish believers had been forced out of Jerusalem because of persecution, they spread out into surrounding regions, taking with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Upon arriving at Antioch, the word was preached to the Greeks. A church sprang up, and Barnabas came to Antioch and became the church's first pastor. He soon called upon Saul to help him in the work of shepherding these new believers (see Acts 11).

At Antioch, Paul saw Peter's refusal to eat with Gentiles as a serious threat to the gospel. He publicly called Peter a hypocrite. The intensity of Paul's reaction to Peter derived from the impending danger Paul saw for the church if this teaching on circumcision prevailed and the separation between Jew and Gentile remained.

#### APPLY THE WORD

Because Paul had a very clear sense of what the gospel meant, he confronted Peter, not about mere technical points of doctrine, but about something Paul saw as fundamental to the gospel. Paul feared that Peter's decision not to eat with Gentiles threatened the gospel and would fracture the church. The gospel message is a message about the salvation of individuals, but it's also radical message of unity, bringing together all people who call on the name of Jesus.

---

#### Galatians 2:11-21 TODAY IN THE WORD

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. - Galatians 2:20

Many of us don't seem to learn a lesson the first time. This seems to be the case with the apostle Peter, who still had trouble accepting differences in Gentile eating customs even after the Lord had given him a vision saying, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15).

When Peter separated himself from Gentile Christians, Paul recognized that he was failing to live wisely in light of the gospel (v. 14). Peter's refusal to eat with them made an implicit statement—Gentile believers are not equals. Paul understood that Peter was, in effect, denying the heart and power of the gospel message. By refusing to eat with the Gentile converts Peter was essentially saying that the justification God had granted to Gentiles as a result of their faith in the gospel was of no effect, for until they adopted the practices of the Jewish Law, they were not fully equal members of Jesus' church. To Paul's dismay, even Peter, one of the original disciples, failed to grasp the meaning of the gospel.

One of the benefits of this unfortunate conflict is that we get to see what Paul says about wise gospel living. In response to Peter, Paul argues that the Law has reached its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ. Peter, as a believer in Jesus, agrees with Paul that justification (that is, being declared righteous) comes only through faith in Christ, not through the Law (vv. 15–16, 21). Yet the implication of this is that one also dies to the Law (v. 19).

Paul's point is this: everyone who believes in Jesus has in effect been crucified with Jesus. Such a one has vicariously died with Christ to the Law. This vicarious inclusion in the death of Jesus implies that one is also included in His resurrection to new life. As a result of Jesus' death and resurrection, justification is available, by faith, for those who belong to Christ.

#### APPLY THE WORD

Many of us can relate to Peter and his reluctance to let go of his old notions of what it meant to serve God. Although God may not send us a dramatic vision as He did to Peter, He still speaks through His Word to us to align our ideas with His.

---

#### GALATIANS 2:11-21

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, [Paul] withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed (Galatians 2:11).



The apostle Peter, though a devoted follower of Jesus, made a serious mistake in separating himself from Gentile believers just to please his narrow-minded Jewish friends. So Paul rebuked him lest he lead others astray. He knew that even a dedicated Christian can err and bring great harm to the work of the Lord.

Hobart E. Freeman was a sincere pastor who helped many people find Jesus as their personal Savior. But when he spoke negatively of doctors as "medical deities" and urged his followers not to seek medical attention, he caused them needless suffering. Apparently some died from illnesses that could have been cured. The Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel claims to have documented evidence of eighty-six deaths among Freeman's people. A young mother who had been a member of his church said that both she and her baby would have died if she had followed his directions. A doctor told her that she should have a Caesarean section, but she and her husband decided to follow Free-man's counsel and not have a doctor on hand for delivery. But when it became obvious that both mother and baby would die without medical attention, they quickly changed their minds.

We must be careful whom we trust. Even when people seem devoutly religious, sincere, and honest, we should test their teaching by asking the Lord for guidance, searching the Scriptures, and talking with knowledgeable, trustworthy Christians. Sincere people can be sincerely wrong. —H.V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Error is often dressed in the garb of truth.

**Galatians 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.**

Greek: pro (before) tou gar elthein (V-ANA) certain ones apo Iakōbou meta tōn ethnōn synēsthien (V-IIA-3S) hote de ēlthon (V-AIA-3P) hypestellen (he was drawing back - imperfect tense - V-IIA-3S) kai aphōrizen (was separating - imperfect tense V-IIA-3S) heauton phoboumenos (V-PPM/P-NMS) tous ek peritomēs

Amplified: For up to the time that certain persons came from James, he ate his meals with the Gentile [converts]; but when the men [from Jerusalem] arrived, he withdrew and held himself aloof from the Gentiles and [ate] separately for fear of those of the circumcision [party].

Phillips Until the arrival of some of James' companions, he, Peter, was in the habit of eating his meals with the Gentiles. After they came, he withdrew and ate separately from the Gentiles - out of sheer fear of what the Jews might think

Wuest For before certain from James came, with the Gentiles it was his habit to eat meals. But when they came, he began gradually to draw himself back, and began slowly to effect a final separation, fearing those of the circumcision. ([Erdmans Publishing](#))

GNT Galatians 2:12 προ το γρ λθε ν πινος π ακ βου μετ τ ν θν ν συν σθιεν· τε δ λθον, π στελλεν κα φ ριζεν αυτ ν φοβο μενος το ς κ περιτομ ς.

NLT Galatians 2:12 When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision.

KJV 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.

ESV Galatians 2:12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

ASV Galatians 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.

CSB Galatians 2:12 For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party.

NIV Galatians 2:12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

NKJ Galatians 2:12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

NRS Galatians 2:12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.

YLT Galatians 2:12 for before the coming of certain from James, with the nations he was eating, and when they came, he was withdrawing and separating himself, fearing those of the circumcision,

NAB Galatians 2:12 For, until some people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to draw back and separated himself, because he was afraid of the circumcised.

NJB Galatians 2:12 Before certain people from James came, he used to eat with gentiles; but as soon as these came, he backed out and kept apart from them, out of fear of the circumcised.

GWN Galatians 2:12 He ate with people who were not Jewish until some men James had sent from Jerusalem arrived. Then Cephas drew back and would not associate with people who were not Jewish. He was afraid of those who insisted that circumcision was necessary.

BBE Galatians 2:12 For before certain men came from James, he did take food with the Gentiles: but when they came, he went back and made himself separate, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

- **Prior to the coming of certain men from James:** Ga 2:9 Ac 21:18-25
- **He used to eat with the Gentiles:** Ac 10:28 11:3 Eph 2:15,19-22 3:6
- **But when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof** Isa 65:5 Lu 15:2 1Th 5:22
- **fearing the party of the circumcision:** Pr 29:25 Isa 57:11 Mt 26:69-75
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REASON FOR PAUL'S REBUKE OF PETER

For (gar) is a [term of explanation](#). Here Paul introduces the explanation of the circumstances that led to his rebuke of Peter and why he stood condemned.

**Prior to the coming of certain men from James - James** is undoubtedly James the pillar discussed above, and probably the leading apostle in the early church in Jerusalem. So clearly men associated with James "carried a lot of weight" as we might say today. The were "heavy hitters" so to speak. While the text does not say James himself actually sent them, the preposition **from** (apo as in "apostle" sent one) suggest that James did in fact send them to Antioch.

So before these **certain men** came Peter was open to dining with the Gentile Christians. While we cannot give the exact sequence of events, it is possible that James in Jerusalem received reports of the sharing of meals between the believing Jews and Gentiles. And so he sent "**certain men**" to check it out. Another interpretation is that these **certain men** were lying and had not been sent by James, but were in fact Judaizers.

**John MacArthur** offers another interpretation of **certain men** for he feels they were Judaizers adding that "These men were of the party of the circumcision and not only taught a false gospel but also made false claims of support by the Jerusalem apostles and elders." ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Hendriksen** agrees with **MacArthur** writing "In the light of such passages as Acts 15:1+, Acts 15:24+ it is not necessary to conclude that these "investigators" actually represented the view of James or that they had been delegated by him. Far more natural would seem to be the explanation that they came from the church at Jerusalem, a church in which James occupied a position of special prominence. Although some cling to the theory that these "individuals from James" and "those who belonged to the circumcision party" are two different groups, the text does not demand this interpretation. In all probability the "individuals from James" belonged to the same group as the Judaizers to which reference is made in Acts 15:1. In the latter passage they demanded that the Gentiles, in order to be admitted to the church, be circumcised. Here we meet them once more in the same city of Antioch, and this time they insist (perhaps by their very presence and refusal to eat with Gentile believers) that Jews dine with Jews, Gentiles with Gentiles. And Cephas hesitates, then little by little begins to withdraw himself from the Gentiles, until at length he is completely separating himself and is no longer eating with the Gentiles." ([Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon](#))

**He (Peter) used to eat with the Gentiles** - Peter's experience in Acts 10:1-48+ with the Gentile Cornelius and the vision signifying all foods were clean (Acts 10:10-14, 15+) led him to feel free to eat with the Gentiles. Peter experienced freedom from the Law at that time, even to the point of eating with Gentiles which was tantamount to placing Jews and Christians on the same level in one family in Christ! Paul later wrote "there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile)...for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28+) What is even more amazing is that Peter subsequently resisted a Jewish frontal attack against him for eating with the

Gentiles and eloquently, soundly defended his position. Luke records this event in Acts 11...

**Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, 3 saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." 4 But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, 6 and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. 7 "I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 "But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9" But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.' 10 "This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. 11 "And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12 "The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house. 13 "And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; 14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' 15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. 16 "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" 18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:1-18+)**

**Guzik** - Yet now Peter refused to eat with Gentile believers. When a Jew refused to eat with a Gentile, he did this in obedience to Jewish rituals. Peter had already learned that obedience to these rituals (such as keeping kosher) was not essential for salvation, for either Jews or Gentiles (Acts 10 and 11). Peter had stopped keeping these Jewish rituals for himself, but now he acted as if he did keep them, so as to accommodate the legalism of the **certain men from James**. Peter no longer kept a strict observance of the Law of Moses for himself, but by his actions, he implied that Gentile believers must keep the law—when he himself did not.

**Eat with (4906)** (**sunesthio** from **sun/syn** = together with + **esthio** = to eat) means literally to eat with someone, to take food together with. **Friberg** adds the verb means "of social association eat together, associate with on familiar terms." (Borrow **Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament**) The use of the **imperfect tense** here in Gal 2:12 indicates that Peter joined the Gentiles in meals repeatedly. It was Peter's regular practice to commune with them. (see John MacArthur's interpretation below).

Note the prefix **sun/syn** which speaks of an intimate association. Clearly Peter's interaction with these Gentile Christians was one of close communion and genuine fellowship with his Gentile brothers in Christ. It was a good relationship that spoke powerfully to the unifying effect of the Gospel regarding Jewish and Gentile believers. Peter's subsequent actions however began to impugn the truth of the oneness and unity believers have in Christ.

Note especially the events in Acts 11 where Peter actually defended eating with the uncircumcised Gentiles! Clearly he did not remain steadfast in the face of Jewish peer pressure as Paul relates here in Gal 2:12. Paul himself gave instructions explaining that one should not eat with a "so-called brother" who is living in sin, which clearly was not true in Peter's failure to eat with the Gentile brethren.

It is used only 5x in the NT

Luke 15:2+ Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and **eats with them**."

Acts 10:41+ (Context = Jesus post-resurrection appearances - Acts 10:40) not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who **ate** and drank **with** Him (Jesus) after He arose from the dead.

Acts 11:3+ saying, "You went to uncircumcised men (Gentiles) and **ate with them**."

1 Corinthians 5:11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to **eat with** such a one.

Galatians 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

**Sunesthio** is used 4x in the Septuagint - Ge 43:32; Ex. 18:12; 2 Sa 12:17; Ps. 100:5

## PETER "TRIMS HIS SAILS"

**But when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision**- Paul says what Peter did (withdraw...hold himself aloof) and why he did it, in a word, fear of man! The **ESV** say "He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision."

**He began to withdraw** (began to shrink back) (**5288**) (**hupostello** from **hupo** = under, underneath + **stello** = to set, place) means to withdraw, to consciously retreat from a position as Peter did here in Gal 2:12. He originally had fellowshiped with the Gentile believers. In classic Greek **hupostello** was used to describe a dog tucking (letting down) his tail, a ship's sail that was furled (= to wrap around a stay or mast and fasten by a cord) or drawn down. The lowering of the sail slackens the course. **Hupostello** is used for strategic military disengagement. Polybius used it to describe troops drawing back from the enemy in order to secure shelter and safety.

**Wuest** adds that "Polybius used this word **hupostello** of the drawing back of troops in order to place them under shelter. This suggests a retreat on the part of Peter from motives of caution. The tense is **imperfect**, indicating that Peter did not start his withdrawal from the Gentile tables at once, but gradually, under the pressure of their criticism. It gives a graphic picture of the Jerusalem apostle's irresolute and tentative efforts to withdraw from an intercourse that gave offense to these visitors. The verb also was used of **furling the sails of a boat**. Peter, the former fisherman, was expert at that. Now he was "*trimming his sails*" in a controversy that involved Jewish freedom from the Mosaic law which had been set aside at the Cross." **Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3** - used by [permission](#))

**Vincent** observes that **hupostello** is "a picturesque word. Originally, to draw in or contract. Used of furling sails, and of closing the fingers; of drawing back for shelter; of keeping back one's real thoughts; by physicians, of withholding food from patients."

**He began to hold himself aloof** (**873**) (**aphorizo** from **apó** = off from, apart + **horizo** = mark out the limit) means to mark off the boundaries, to appoint, set one apart for some purpose. **Aphorizo** like **hupostello** is in the **imperfect tense**, indicating that Peter's separation from the Gentiles was gradual and not abrupt. Nevertheless Peter gradually withdrew and slowly separated until the separation from the Gentile believers was complete.

**Guzik** suggests that Peter's "separation was probably at the church potluck dinner, which they called "the agape banquet" or the "love feast." They would also remember the Lord's death at this dinner and take communion together. Therefore, it is possible that Peter turned these Gentile Christians away from the communion table (THIS IS CONJECTURE BUT IS POSSIBLE)."

**Leon Morris** agrees suggesting that "It may be that the observance of holy communion was involved in this, for it seems that often in the early church it was celebrated at a meal shared by all the believers. If this was the case at Antioch, there would have been a division of believers at the table of the Lord." ([Galatians: Paul's Charter of Christian Freedom](#))

## FEAR THREATENED PETER'S FREEDOM

Why did Peter fold to Judaistic pressure? In one word - fear. Surely Peter knew the proverb that addressed the very issue with which he was confronted. Of course it is one thing to know the truth, but quite another to practice the truth (WE ALL UNDERSTAND THAT PRINCIPLE DON'T WE!)...

The fear of man brings a snare (**moqesh**),

But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted (**sagab**).

(Proverbs 29:25) ([Read William Arnot's comments](#))

**Don Anderson** writes "When we get our eyes off the Lord Jesus and our one desire to please Him, and we get those eyes on people around us and our desire is to please them, we then begin to fail in making the normal progress toward spiritual growth that should be ours." (cf Gal 1:10+). Since the Judaizers were claiming special authorization from Peter, it was necessary to point out in Paul's argument that Peter by no means was infallible. I think it is interesting for us to note here that Peter is by no means pictured as a person who is perfect or infallible in all of his judgments but that he, too, can make mistakes and can fail to act in the best interest of everyone who is involved in a situation. ([Notes](#))

**Fearing the party of the circumcision** - The word "**party**" is not in the Greek text, so the **NET** rendering reads "because he was afraid of those who were pro-circumcision." (Gal 2:12NET). How different was Peter's reaction to pressure compared with that of Paul at Jerusalem - "But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you." (Gal 2:5+)

**John Stott** minces no words writing that Peter's "withdrawal from table-fellowship with Gentile believers was not prompted by any theological principle, but by craven fear of a small pressure group ... He still believed the gospel, but he failed to practise it." ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Calvin** points out: This shews us how cautiously we ought to guard against giving way to the opinions of men, lest an immoderate desire to please, or an undue dread of giving offence, should turn us aside from the right path.

**MacArthur** - The old Peter—weak, fearful, and vacillating—had come to the fore again. Here was the same Peter who under divine inspiration declared Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" but who a short while later rebuked his Lord for saying that He must suffer and die (Matt. 16:16, 22). Here is the same Peter who boldly declared he would die rather than deny his Lord but who, before the night was out, had denied Him three times (Mark 14:29-31, 66-72). Here was the same Peter who was called to preach but who disobediently went back to fishing even after he had encountered the resurrected Christ (John 21:3). ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Anderson** points out that "Peter still was not sure of his own personal convictions in this matter and he had confusion over what part rules and regulations still had to play in his life as a Christian. He seemed to be living by a DOUBLE STANDARD: Grace for salvation, but law in the Christian life."

**Fearing** (5399)([phobeo](#)) in the present passive means to continually be afraid.

**Guzik** - It is easy to criticize Peter; but every person knows what it means to do something that you know is wrong. Everyone knows what it feels like to go against what you know very well is right. Everyone knows what it feels like when social pressure pushes you towards compromise in some way....This was the kind of behavior that dominated Peter's life before he was transformed by the power of God. This was like Peter telling Jesus not to go to the cross, or Peter taking his eyes off of Jesus and sinking when walking on the water, or like Peter cutting off the ear of the servant of the High Priest when soldiers came to arrest Jesus. We see that the flesh was still present in Peter. Salvation and the filling of the Holy Spirit did not make Peter perfect; the old Peter was still there, just seen less often. We might be surprised that Peter compromised even though he knew better; but we are only surprised if we don't believe what God says about the weakness and corruption of our flesh. Paul himself knew this struggle, as he described it in Romans 7:18: For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

#### **Fear God and you won't fear men.**

As they often say, it's not how the story begins but how it ends. In Peter's case after a shaky beginning, there was a strong finish (a great example for all God's children to imitate and emulate, especially if they have had past failures in their Christian life!) And so in spite of Peter's actions in Antioch, it is interesting to read Peter's words on **fear** written about 63AD, some 12-13 years after this episode in Galatians (49-50AD). It is clear that over the intervening decade Peter had continued to grow "**in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**" (cp 2 Peter 3:18+). Listen to the words from a more spiritually mature Peter regarding **fear**:

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct** (command - only possible as we are enabled by the Spirit, so lean hard each day into His presence and sufficient power) **yourselves in fear** during the time of your stay upon earth;" (1 Peter 1:17+)

**Honor** all men; **love** the brotherhood, **fear** (red verbs are all commands -- don't try to obey in your strength, for only by relying on the Spirit's enabling power can we keep these commandments) God, **honor** the king. (1 Peter 2:17+)

Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any **fear**. (1 Peter 3:6+)

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness (THE VERY THING THAT HAPPENED TO PETER AS HE WAS EATING WITH THE GENTILES!), you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR** (conveys the sense of a command) THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, (1 Peter 3:14+)

**COMMENT** - Can you imagine what went through Peter's mind as he wrote these inspired words, which were the very antithesis of his action years earlier in the church at Antioch! We should all praise God for our continued growth in Christ-likeness as we mature in the faith. Thank You Lord. Amen.

---

**Stephen Olford** has a thought provoking discussion explaining Peter's withdrawal as an example of the denial of the Cross -

Whatever else we can say about Peter, he was dodging the message of the Cross! For...to be justified by the grace of God is to die—as far as the law is concerned, so as to live—as far as God is concerned (**Ed**: cp Mark 8:34-38).

And this is not the first time Peter was rebuked for dodging the *crucified life*. It happened after his great confession at Caesarea Philippi. What could be clearer than his words "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"? So sound and fundamental was this declaration that Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Mt 16:16-19) Yet shortly afterward, when "Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised," we read that "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you!'" (Mt 16:22) But the Lord "turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'" (Mt 16:23) Then the Master added: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?" (Mt. 16:24-26). Peter's refusal to accept the way of the Cross eventually led to the shameful denial of his Lord—even after boasting that he would lay down his life for Jesus' sake (Jn 13:37; see Mt. 26:30-35; Mk 14:30-31; Lk 22:31-34). But that was before Pentecost and, therefore, somewhat understandable.

But for you and me there is no excuse since we have the Holy Spirit. And yet we are living in an hour when the message of the *crucified life* is the last thing many professing Christians want to hear. They adore the **cradle of Christ** and await the **coming of Christ**, but they abhor the **Cross of Christ**. For many religious people, the Cross is either a stumbling block or a laughing stock (1 Cor. 1:23). For this reason the message of this book is so necessary for true overcomers in the Christian life. ([Not I But Christ](#))

---

**Martin Luther** commenting on Gal 2:12 wrote that "**No man's standing is so secure that he may not fall. If Peter fell, I may fall.** If he rose again, I may rise again. We have the same gifts that they had, the same Christ, the same baptism and the same Gospel, the same forgiveness of sins."

**THOUGHT** - The tragedy is that Martin Luther's comment proved in a sense a self fulfilled prophecy. Sadly Luther did fall! The following words were penned by Martin Luther. And tragically many of the Jewish people you seek to share the Gospel with are aware of this quote (Here is one example of the fallout - Jerusalem Post article entitled [Martin Luther \[1483 - 1546\]: Theologian of the Holocaust](#)). And to add to the calamity, apparently the Nazis used Luther's attitude toward the Jews to justify his "ethnic cleansing" activities. Even despite his "fall", Martin Luther was clearly a man greatly used by God and all those saved by grace through faith today will be eternally grateful to him for his landmark teaching on justification by faith alone in Christ alone and his courageous stand against the prevalent false teaching of justification by works by the Catholic church. And of course Luther's stand for truth and against error was used by God to spark the Protestant Reformation, even as in a parallel way Paul's stand for the truth of the Gospel was used by God to build His Church.

Here is what Luther wrote and it was apparent in the form of a pamphlet:

"What then shall we do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? Since they live among us and we know about their lying and blasphemy and cursing, we cannot tolerate them if we do not wish to share in their lies, curses, and blasphemy. In this way we cannot quench the inextinguishable fire of divine rage . . . Let me give you my honest advice.

First, their synagogues or Churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honour of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians, and that we have not wittingly tolerated or approved of such public lying, cursing and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians. . .

Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. For they perpetuate the same things there that they do in their synagogues. For the same reason they ought to be put under one roof or in a stable, like gypsies.

Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer-books and Talmuds in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught.

Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach any more . . .

Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges must be absolutely forbidden to the Jews. For they have no business in the rural districts, since they are not nobles, nor officials, nor merchants, nor the like . . .

Sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury. All their cash and valuables of silver and gold ought to be taken from them and put aside for safe keeping. For this reason, as said before, everything that they possess they stole and robbed from us through their usury, for they have no other means of support . . . Such evilly acquired money is cursed, unless, with God's blessing, it is put to some good and necessary use . . .

If however we are afraid that they might harm us personally . . . then let us apply the same cleverness as the other nations, such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., and settle with them for that which they have extorted usuriously from us, and after having divided it up fairly let us drive them out of the country for all time. For, as has been said, God's rage is so great against them that they only become worse and worse through mild mercy, and not much better through severe mercy. Therefore away with them." (From [On the Jews and Their Lies](#) by Martin Luther, 1543)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Luther's Jewish Problem](#) - Commentary on Luther's writing by Jewish believer Bernard Howard
- [On the Jews and Their Lies - Wikipedia](#)

---

**Galatians 2:13** The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Greek: kai synypekriθhēsai (V-AIP-3P) autō kai hoi loipoi loudaiōi hōste kai Barnabas synapēcēthē (V-AIP-3S) autōn tē hypokrisei

Amplified: And the rest of the Jews along with him also concealed their true convictions and acted insincerely, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy (their example of insincerity and pretense).

Phillips The other Jewish Christians carried out a similar piece of deception, and the force of their bad example was so great that even Barnabas was affected by it.

Wuest And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite jointly with him, so that even Barnabas was swept along with their hypocrisy. [Eerdmans Publishing](#)

NET Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also joined with him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray with them by their hypocrisy.

GNT Galatians 2:13 κα̅ συνυπεκρ̅θησαν̅ α̅τ̅ [κα̅] ο̅ λοιπο̅ ου̅δα̅ οι̅, στε̅ κα̅ Βαρναβ̅ ζ̅ συνυπ̅ χ̅θη̅ α̅τ̅ υ̅ τ̅ πο̅κρ̅σει̅.

NLT Galatians 2:13 As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

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

ESV Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

ASV Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

CSB Galatians 2:13 Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

NIV Galatians 2:13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

NKJ Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

NRS Galatians 2:13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

YLT Galatians 2:13 and dissemble with him also did the other Jews, so that also Barnabas was carried away by their dissimulation.

NAB Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews (also) acted hypocritically along with him, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

NJB Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews put on the same act as he did, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity.

GWN Galatians 2:13 The other Jewish Christians also joined him in this hypocrisy. Even Barnabas was swept along with them.

BBE Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews went after him, so that even Barnabas was overcome by their false ways.

- **the other** (KJV): Ge 12:11-13 26:6,7 27:24 Ec 7:20 10:1 1Co 5:6 8:9 15:33
- **carried** (KJV): Job 15:12 1Co 12:2 Eph 4:14 Heb 13:9
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER'S PRETENSE PERSUADES OTHERS

**The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy** - Here Paul describes the [deleterious](#) consequence of Peter's inconsistent conduct. The effect of Peter who was known as a leader was to draw other Jewish believers to join with him.

**THOUGHT** - Leaders beware! Dear leader be circumspect regarding your conduct (in both public and private) for others are watching you! If you stray down the wrong path, don't be surprised when other follow you down that crooked trail! And don't forget that you will be held responsible.

**Rest of the Jews** - This refers to all of the other Jewish believers at Antioch and not to non-believing Jews who generally not have eaten with Gentiles in the first place. [Vine](#) notes that "While there is no direct injunction in the Mosaic Law forbidding the Israelite to eat with the Gentile, a rabbinic deduction to that effect was rigidly observed by the stricter Jews of the sect of the Pharisees."

**Wuest** comments that "The church was split wide open on the issue. The love-feast, that bond of fellowship expressive of Christian love amongst the brethren, was divided into two groups. The friendly groups of Jews and Gentiles in the fellowship of the homes were discontinued. The fact that the Jews of the Antioch church followed Peter in his withdrawal from the Gentiles, shows that the entire group had eaten with the latter." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Recall what Luke had recorded earlier about Peter

"Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him." (Acts 10:34-35+)

And yet her is Peter showing partiality! He was playing the part of a hypocrite!

**Anderson** - Peter is COMPROMISING here instead of standing for his CONVICTIONS. One is reminded of the CHARACTER and COURAGE of MARTIN LUTHER at the Diet of Worms when he said: "Here I stand. God help me." May it be God's desire to give us more mighty oaks like the Apostle Paul that can stand the storms and pressure of life even if it means that it is necessary to stand alone

**Joined....hypocrisy (4942)** ([sunupokrinomai](#) from [sun/syn](#) = together with + [hupokrinomai](#) [only in Lk 20:20] = feign, pretend) means to play a part with. It means "to pretend to act from one motive when one's conduct is really actuated by another." ([Vine](#)) See note below on related word [hupokrisis](#). [Friberg](#) says [sunupokrinomai](#) means "join in pretending or playing a part; figuratively speak or act falsely along with, join in hypocrisy." (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

The basic meaning of the Greek word for **hypocrisy** is "to answer from under" and refers to actors who, in playing a part, spoke from under a mask. The actors hid their true selves behind the role they were playing. The word indicates the concealment of wrong feelings, character, etc., under the pretense of better ones. **Peter's actions of withdrawing** concealed his genuine belief that one enters and enjoys the Gospel only by grace through faith and without addition of works of any kind. Peter's withdrawing from the Gentile believers in fact was in a sense a "work of the Law" (i.e., Jews should not eat with Gentiles) that he was adding to the Gospel of grace. Paul saw this as a dangerous detour from **the truth of the Gospel** and did not hesitate to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 1:3±).

[Vine](#) explains that "In this case Paul charged Peter with pretending that his change of attitude toward the Gentiles was the expression of loyalty to the law of Moses, whereas it was really the outcome of fear of the Judaizers."

**Guzik** on their **hypocrisy** - "In this case Peter, Barnabas, and the rest of the Jewish Christians in Antioch knew that these Gentile believers were really Christians. Yet, because of the pressure from the certain men from James, they acted like they were not Christians at all." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**With the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy**- **Amplified** = "with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy (their example of insincerity and pretense)." It must have pained Paul deeply to write those words "even Barnabas," Paul's dear brother in Christ who had been such a son of encouragement to him!

**Campbell** on Barnabas' defection - The pressure must have been great for Barnabas to succumb because he was from Cyprus, a Gentile center, and was involved in a missionary program with Paul to reach Gentiles with the gospel. (BKC)

Peter had sown to the flesh and now was beginning to reap the corruption that always accompanies fleshly actions! (Gal 6:7-8)

**Hansen** adds that "After all, **Barnabas**, as the first pastor of the church in Antioch, had warmly welcomed Gentile believers. He had worked alongside Paul in that church and in their mission of planting Gentile churches in Galatia. He had stood with Paul in the Jerusalem conference. How could even loyal **Barnabas** deny the truth of the gospel now? Didn't he of all people know that Gentile believers were to be fully accepted? Yes, he must have known that. But the emotions stirred up in the crisis swept him along to act contrary to his convictions. And so along with the rest of the Jewish Christians he was guilty of hypocrisy: behavior inconsistent with basic beliefs." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Wuest** notes that "From Paul's viewpoint, it was their better knowledge (**Ed**: In other words PETER AND BARNABAS knew better -- they knew he did not need to withdraw) which they covered up by their misconduct, the usual type of hypocrisy that proceeds from fear. Paul, by characterizing their actions as hypocrisy, implied that there had been no real change of **conviction** on the part of Peter and the rest of the Jews (**Ed**: That is, they still genuinely believed the truth of the Gospel), but only **conduct** that misrepresented their true **convictions**. But now regarding Barnabas, and the fact that he was swept off his feet and carried away with their hypocrisy. It was bad enough for Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles and the champion of Gentile liberty from the law, to have Peter act as he did. But the hypocrisy of **Barnabas** was the cruel blow. With the single exception of Paul, Barnabas had been the most effective minister of the Gospel in the conversion of the Gentiles. He had been [deputed](#) with Paul by the Antioch church to the council at Jerusalem as its representative. He had come back with the news that the position held by Paul and himself with regard to Gentile freedom from circumcision had been sustained by the Jerusalem apostles (**Ed**: **Wuest** is referring to the Jerusalem council of Acts 15). Now, his withdrawal from social fellowship with the Gentiles, came with the force of a betrayal to Paul and the church at Antioch. **The defection of Barnabas was of a far more serious nature with regard to Gentile freedom than the vacillation of Peter. Barnabas was Paul's chief colleague in the evangelization of the Gentiles, and now to have him play the hypocrite and deserter, was a bitter blow to the great apostle.** This may well have prepared the way for the dissension between them which shortly afterwards led to their separation (Acts 15:39). Barnabas, the foremost champion of Gentile liberty next to Paul had become a **turncoat!**" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

While the defection of Barnabas must have been a deep blow to Paul as **Vine** observes "not even the defection of Barnabas had weakened Paul's purpose to establish the freedom of the new faith....Even Barnabas, "good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" though he was, Acts 11:24, failed in this crisis."

**Carried away** (4879)(**sunapago** from **sun/syn** = together + **apágo** = lead or carry away [apo = away]) means literally in the passive to be led together and is used only figuratively in the NT. The idea is to experience with others the force of that which carries away, to be "carried away with" as with a flood. **Carried away** is in the passive voice suggesting that Barnabas did not play an active role in the hypocrisy, but that he was swept away from what he knew was right. Recall that Peter was a leader and when leaders go even if they are "not walking orthopedically," (so to speak, cp Gal 2:14) others will follow.

**Wiersbe** comments on Peter's hypocrisy writing that he "pretended that his actions were motivated by faithfulness, when they were really motivated by fear. How easy it is to use "Bible doctrine" to cover up our disobedience." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Hypocrisy** (5272)(**hupokrisis** from **hupo** = under + **krino** =to judge; See also word study on **Hypocrite** = **hupokrites**) comes from the Greek theater and referred to the practice of putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. A show of **hypocrisy** seeks to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations (a perfect description of Peter's conduct which was at odds with his conviction), and thus is characterized by play-acting, [pretense](#) or outward show. Hypocrisy means to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones.

**Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"**

Greek: all' hote eidon (V-A1A-1S) ouk orthopodousin (they are walking uprightly - V-PIA-3P) pros tēn alētheian tou euangeliou eipon (V-A1A-1S) Kēpha emprosthen pantōn Ei su loudaios hyparchōn (V-PPA-NMS) ethnikōs kai ouk loudaikōs zēs pōs ta ethnē anakazeis (V-PIA-2S) ioudaizein (to Judaize - V-PNA)

Amplified: But as soon as I saw that they were not straightforward and were not living up to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas (Peter) before everybody present, If you, though born a Jew, can live [as you have been living] like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how do you dare now to urge and practically force the Gentiles to [comply with the ritual of Judaism and] live like Jews?

Phillips But when I saw that this behaviour was a contradiction of the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter so that everyone could hear, "If you, who are a Jew, do not live like a Jew but like a Gentile, why on earth do you try to make Gentiles live like Jews?"

Wuest - But when I saw that they were not pursuing a straightforward course in relation to the truth of the gospel, I said to Kephas in the presence of everybody, If you, being a Jew, habitually are living after the manner of the Gentiles, and not after that of the Jews, how is it that you are compelling the Gentiles to live after the Jewish manner?([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by [permission](#))

NET Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not behaving consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "If you, although you are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you try to force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

GNT Galatians 2:14 ἄλλ' ὅτε εἶδον τὸ κ ρθoπoδoσιν π ρς τ τ ν ἄθeιαν τo ε αγγελoυ, εἰπoν τ Kηφ μπpοσθεν π ντων, E σ ουδαοc π ρχων θνικς κα οχ ουδαϊκς ζς, πς τ θνη ναγκ ζεις ουδα ζειν;

NLT Galatians 2:14 When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"

KJV 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?

ESV Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

ASV Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

CSB Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?"

NIV Galatians 2:14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

NKJ Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

NRS Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

YLT Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they are not walking uprightly to the truth of the good news, I said to Peter before all, 'If thou, being a Jew, in the manner of the nations dost live, and not in the manner of the Jews, how the nations dost thou compel to Judaize?'

NAB Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not on the right road in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Kephas in front of all, "If you, though a Jew, are living like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

NJB Galatians 2:14 When I saw, though, that their behaviour was not true to the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of all of them, 'Since you, though you are a Jew, live like the gentiles and not like the Jews, how can you compel the gentiles to live like the Jews?'

GWN Galatians 2:14 But I saw that they were not properly following the truth of the Good News. So I told Cephas in front of everyone, "You're Jewish, but you live like a person who is not Jewish. So how can you insist that people who are not Jewish must live like Jews?"

BBE Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not living uprightly in agreement with the true words of the good news, I said to Cephas before them all, If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not like the Jews, how will you make the Gentiles do the same as the Jews?

- **when I saw that they were not straightforward** Ps 15:2 Ps 58:1 Ps 84:11 Pr 2:7 Pr 10:9
- **about the truth of the gospel:** Ga 2:5 Ro 14:14 1Ti 4:3-5 Heb 9:10
- **I said to Cephas in the presence of all:** Ga 2:11 Lev 19:17 Ps 141:5 Pr 27:5,6 1Ti 5:20
- **If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews** Ga 2:12,13 Ac 10:28 11:3-18
- **how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews** Ga 2:3 6:12 Ac 15:10,11,19-21,24,28,29
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PETER'S PERVERSION OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

In this last section (Galatians 2:14-21) Paul explains the justification for his rebuke of Peter.

**Swindoll** outlines this last section

- Paul's Rebuke of Peter (Gal 2:14)
- Paul's Review of Justification by Grace Alone (Gal 2:15-16)
- Paul's Rejection of the Charge of License (Gal 2:17-18)
- Paul's Reflection on the Exchanged Life (Gal 2:19-20)
- Paul's Return to the Central Issue (Gal 2:21)

**But (alla)** is a strong term of contrast. Paul realized that there was to be an immediate response in order to bring about a change of direction from the ongoing defection!

**Phillips** has a good paraphrase - "But when I saw that this behaviour was a contradiction of the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter so that everyone could hear, "If you, who are a Jew, do not live like a Jew but like a Gentile, why on earth do you try to make Gentiles live like Jews?""

**When I saw** - Paul's spiritual discernment "kicked in" immediately for he realized that this was no small matter but that **the truth of the Gospel** was in jeopardy! Proverbs 10:9 says "He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out." It did not take long for Paul to "find out" or sense the potential significance of Peter's hypocrisy.

**That they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel** - Literally "they were not walking uprightly". As the NET Bible says "they were not behaving consistently with the truth of the gospel." One could paraphrase it as "They were not walking on the straight path in accord with the truth of the Gospel." The NIV has "When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel."

Paul quickly saw that Peter had contradicted the **truth of the Gospel**. Why? **Hansen** explains - The gospel proclaimed that salvation for both Jews and Gentiles was by way of the cross of Christ and union with Christ. But Peter's separation from table fellowship with Gentile Christians implied that salvation for Gentiles required strict adherence to the law and incorporation into the Jewish nation. No doubt Peter would have denied that he meant to communicate this requirement to the Gentile believers. But how else could his action be interpreted? The Gentile believers could not help but conclude from Peter's withdrawal that they were lacking something, that they were unacceptable outcasts. If they wanted to enjoy fellowship with Peter and the mother church in Jerusalem, they would have to become Jews. Their experience of salvation would be incomplete until they became Jews and observed the Jewish law. Gentile believers would have seen these implications of Peter's action even if Peter did not. ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**David Guzik** explains that the Judaizers "said loud and clear, "You can only be right with God if you put yourself under the demands of the Law of Moses. You must be circumcised. You must eat a kosher diet. You must observe the feasts and rituals. You must do nothing that would imply partnership with someone who is not under the Law of Moses. This is the only way to receive the salvation of Jesus." That message made Paul say, *I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel*...What a scene this must have been! There they were, at the Antioch Christian potluck. The Gentile Christians had just been asked to leave, or were told to sit in their own section away from the real Christians. They also weren't allowed to share the same food that the real Christians ate. **Peter**—the honored guest—went along with all this. **Barnabas**—the man who led many of the Gentiles to Jesus—went along with all this. **The rest of the Jews** in the church at Antioch went along with all this. But Paul would not stand for it. Because this was a public affront to the Gentile Christians and because it was a public denial of **the truth of the gospel**" ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Martin Luther** underscores the danger regarding **the truth of the Gospel** in what Peter was doing by commenting that "Peter did not say so, but his example said quite plainly that the observance of the Law must be added to faith in Christ (**the truth of the Gospel**), if men are to be saved. From Peter's example the Gentiles could not help but draw the conclusion that the Law was necessary unto salvation." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** on **they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel** - "You didn't walk with straight feet." In other words, here is the line of truth, and...You did not stay parallel to **the truth**. You didn't walk a straight course. You didn't walk an unwavering, sincere course in conduct according to **the truth**...You did not walk uprightly according to **the truth of the gospel**. You started drifting off from the line of **the truth**." Now the amazing thing about it is Peter knew **the truth**, didn't he? Sure he did. And he believed it. He simply played the part of a hypocrite in order to gain popularity with the legalistic section of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:13)." ([Galatians 2:14-21 Salvation by Faith Alone, Part 2](#))

**Were...straightforward** (3716) (orthopodeo from orthós = straight, right, level + poús = foot) means literally to walk with straight feet, to be straight-footed and so to go directly forward, walking uprightly and correctly. The NAS marginal note has "progressing toward; literally walking straightly." **Vine** adds it means "to walk in a straight path," and so to leave a straight track for others to follow, cp. Hebrews 12:13." It is a metaphor which speak of a course of conduct and is used only here in the Bible. Paul used this verb figuratively to describe their defective "spiritual gait" so to speak! Unfortunately when Peter led, others followed and also failed to walk according to the true Gospel of grace.

It is better to go straight than to move in the best of circles.

- Anonymous

**Wuest** adds that **orthopodeo** "speaks of straightforward, unwavering, sincere conduct in contrast to a crooked, wavering, and more or less insincere course such as Paul had said Peter and the other Jews were guilty of. Keeping in mind the foregoing definition of the Greek word we could say, "But when I saw that they walked not orthopedically," that is, in a straightforward, unwavering, and sincere way...The idea is, "He (Peter) did not pursue a straight course in relation to **the truth of the gospel**." He did not deal honestly and consistently with it. His was an attitude that led him to juggle with its sacred truth, to warp it, to misrepresent it, to deal crookedly with it. What an indictment of Peter." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

**Vine** has a pithy note on **the truth of the Gospel** - Paul charges them with nothing less than robbery of God, for to deny explicitly, or **implicitly** as Peter and the Judaizers were doing, that men are saved by faith in Christ alone, which is "**the truth of the Gospel**," is to deny to God the glory of His grace, and to rob the Christian of "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus," Gal 2:4.

**Donald Campbell** on **the truth of the Gospel** - The *defectors* (PETER, BARNABAS, OTHER JEWISH BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH) **were not acting** according to **the truth of the gospel**, that is, they were denying by their actions **the truth** that on the basis of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection Jews and Gentiles who believe are accepted equally by God. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** has an interesting comment regarding Paul's public rebuke -

1 Timothy 5:1 says, "Rebuke not an elder" (we don't have apostles today, but we do have elders). "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers." In other words, be careful how you talk about elders. You say, "What if they deserve it?" Okay, go to 1 Ti 5:19. "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses..." In other words, be sure that it's confirmed. Why? Because men who are in positions of spiritual leadership are targets for criticism, and much of it unfounded, and it should be substantiated before it's made an issue. But notice the next verse. 1 Ti 5:20, when you do find out that it is true what that elder is accused of, "them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear." In other words, **you don't try to hide the rebuke of a person in a position of leadership, you make it just as public as was the display of his sin** in order that people might know that you truly believe what you say you believe....Paul set down a tremendous pattern in the church, and that is, "I don't care who you are, when you're out of line and your out-of-line activity is public, it's going to get rebuked publicly, that others may know the church doesn't tolerate that." It's a great reminder. It's like Ananias and Sapphira. They sinned and what happened? They didn't disappear secretly. They dropped dead in front of the whole church. (Acts 5:1-10, 11, 12) ([Sermon](#))

**Truth** (225) see preceding note on **aletheia** in the same phrase **the truth of the Gospel**.

**Gospel** (2098) see preceding note on **euaggelion**.

Notice that Paul's authority as an apostle (and independence from the other apostles) is confirmed through this correction of Peter.

**I said to Cephas in the presence of all - Phillips** = "so that everyone could hear." **NLT** = "In front of all the others." Why did he just take Peter to task and not the others? Clearly Peter was the leader and the instigator and deserving full blame and when he was convicted, all who stood with him were convicted! **Spurgeon** comments on Paul's bold confrontation of Peter that "Good men are sometimes afraid of a straight course of action because it may cause trouble or appear to be too bold. In such a case, we must not be silent out of respect for them, but openly oppose them. Dear is Peter, but dearer still the truth." **Augustine** adds that "It is not advantageous to correct in secret an error which injured openly."

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever experienced a public confrontation in a church setting? If you have, you know it is not pleasant and that it has the potential to deteriorate into a no-win situation. It might have been tempting for Paul to call Peter over a corner for some private correction. But Paul knew the cost of avoiding public confrontation was potential compromise in the integrity of the Gospel. I know of an occasion when a pastor avoided public confrontation in a situation having to do with sin that was affecting the entire body because of the person's leadership role. Only eternity will show how many saints were adversely affected because this issue was never brought to light. **MacArthur** adds "Unless the public sin of a believer is dealt with publicly, people will think the church does not take sin seriously and therefore gives tacit approval of it. A church that does not discipline sinning members (including the most prominent members) loses its credibility, because it does not take seriously its own doctrines and standards." (Ibid)

**In the presence** (1715) (**emprosthen** from **en** = in + **prósthēn** = in front of) means before, in front of, in sight of. Paul's rebuke of Peter was in front of the church. Imagine Peter's reaction (cf "stood condemned" in Gal 2:11) to such embarrassing public exposure. Compare Paul's exhortation to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:20 "Those who continue in sin, rebuke **in the presence** (enopion = in the sight of or the eyes) **of all**, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning."

**If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not (absolute negation) like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?** - **Amplified** = "If you, though born a Jew, can live [as you have been living] like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how do you dare now to urge and practically force the Gentiles to [comply with the ritual of Judaism and] live like Jews?" "If you, as a Jew, live as the Gentiles like you have been doing before, how can you turn around and ask the Gentiles to live as Jews when it comes to the issue of the law?"

**Spurgeon** on Peter liberated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ now beginning to **live like the Jews** by works - The idea of salvation by the merit of our own works is exceedingly insinuating. It does not matter how often it is refuted; it asserts itself again and again. And **when it gains the least foothold, it soon makes great advances**. Hence Paul, who was determined to show it no quarter, opposed everything that bore its likeness. He was determined not to permit the thin end of the wedge to be introduced into the Church, for he knew well that willing hands would soon be driving it home. Hence, when Peter sided with the Judaizing party and seemed to favor those who demanded that the Gentiles should be circumcised, our brave apostle withstood him to his face. He fought always for salvation by grace through faith and contended strenuously against all thought of righteousness by obedience to the precepts of the ceremonial or the moral law. No one could be more explicit than he was upon the doctrine that we are not justified or saved by works in any degree, but solely by the grace of God.

**If you, being a Jew** - This **IF** is a fulfilled condition and could be translated *since you are Jews*. **Lightfoot** writes "Here it (**IF**) is very emphatic; **IF** you, born and bred a Jew, discard Jewish customs, how unreasonable to impose them on Gentiles."

**Vine** says that **being** (**huparchō**) conveys the idea of "**being a Jew to begin with**," or being "**born and bred a Jew**."

**Live like the Gentiles...not like the Jews** - In other words Peter previously had exercised and enjoyed his freedom in Christ (free of any constrains of the Law) and so had been willing to eat with the Gentiles (**live like the Gentiles**). He had been **running well** (cf Gal 5:7+), and felt no obligation to live under the ceremonial tenets of the Law (keeping kosher, etc). That was before **the certain men**, very likely Judaizers, came from James. He fell into the snare of fearing men and forgot the power inherent in the fear of God. Trapped in his fear, he felt "forced" to withdraw from sharing meals with the Gentile brethren.

Don Anderson sums it up as "You Were Running Well UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress (Galatians 2:11-21)"

MacArthur adds that the word **live** is **zao** which does not "mean "life" like the word **bios**, or biological life. It (**zao**) has to do with all of the...externals of life. He was externally living like a Gentile." [MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#)

Wuest comments on Peter's beginning to **live like...the Jews** - The word **live** here from **zao**, does not refer to the moral living according to Gentile or Jewish fashion, but to the shaping of the life with reference to the external social observances in the Christian fellowship, such as Levitical restrictions on eating. The **present tense** of **live** must not be pressed to the point of teaching that Peter at the time of this rebuke, was living as the Gentiles do, for he was not. It describes a mental attitude or habit which had in times past shown itself in outward actions (E.G., HIS WILLINGNESS TO EAT WITH THE GENTILE CORNELIUS), and which was still in force, but which was being hypocritically covered up by Peter's action of withdrawing from fellowship with the Gentiles. It shows that Peter had not in principle abandoned it (THE GOSPEL), but had "*trimmed his sails*" to the sudden change of wind that came from Jerusalem. Paul, in his rebuke, forcibly sets forth Peter's inconsistency in compelling the Gentiles to obey the Levitical legislation regarding foods, for the Gentiles had only one of two choices in the premises, either to refuse to obey the law in this respect and thus cause a split in the Christian Church, or to preserve harmony by coming under the law. And the apostle Peter did all this with a full understanding of the vision God had given him (Acts 10:9-16+), which clearly taught him that the Levitical legislation for the Jew was now a thing of the past (Acts 10:28, 29+), and that the line of separation had been broken down between Jew and Gentile by the Cross (ED: See Eph 2:14+, 15+). **Peter's action of refusing to eat with the Gentiles, did not merely have the effect of maintaining the validity of the law for Jewish Christians, but it involved the forcing of that law upon the Gentile Christians, that, or creating a wide-open division in the Church.** This latter was what concerned the apostle Paul. He deemed it of utmost importance to maintain the unity of the Christian Church as against any division into Jewish and Gentile groups. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

Guzik comments that "Paul first reminded Peter that he himself did not live under strict obedience to the Law of Moses. *Peter, you eat bacon and ham and lobster. You don't keep a kosher diet. Yet now, before these visitors, these certain men ... from James, now you act as if you keep these laws all the time.*" ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**You compel the Gentiles to live like Jews** - In other words, by his action of withdrawing from eating with the Gentiles, Peter was in effect putting the Gentile believers under pressure to follow in his "*orthopedically defective*" steps (cf [orthopedeo](#)) and to live like Jews if they wanted to remain in the same church with the Jewish Christians! As a highly **reputed** spiritual leader (Gal 2:9+) this "*misstep*" would have significant repercussions on the Gentile Christians and the Jewish Christian for that matter! They would now feel like they must live like the Jews lived in order to be sure of their justification. Such a works oriented, legalistic mindset was (is) the absolute antithesis of **the truth of the Gospel** which frees men, Jews and Gentiles, from the yoke of slavery and the need to seek to live like Jews in order to merit justification!

**Compel** (315)(**anagkazo** from **anagke** - refers to external pressure and coercion as opposed to willingness) refers to an inner or an outward compulsion for someone to act in a certain manner. **Anagkazo** was used earlier by Paul declaring that "not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was **compelled** to be circumcised." (Gal 2:3+) Paul did not cave in to the pressure at Jerusalem in front of the "pillars" (including Peter), which is amazing, if this confrontation of Peter occurred after the events described in Galatians 2:3+. That would make it even more tragic that Peter was not able to resist the pressure to withdraw from eating with the Gentiles! Paul used **anagkazo** one more time in Galatians 6:12+ describing the Judaizers as "Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh (AND) try to **compel** you (Galatian Gentile believers) to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." The irony in Paul's use of **anagkazo** 3x in Galatians is that compulsion is exactly what he had practiced prior to his conversion, Luke recording "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to **force** (**anagkazo**) them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities." (Acts 26:11+)

**Live like the Jews** (2450)(**ioudaizo** from **ioudaios** = Jew) means to live like a Jew, especially according to their customs, traditions, rituals, manners and laws (especially their law demanding circumcision). The only other use is in Esther 8:17 which reads "many among the peoples of the land **became Jews**." See [dictionary discussion of Judaizer](#).

**BDAG** on **ioudaizo** = To live as one bound by Mosaic ordinances or traditions, live in Judean or Jewish fashion.

**Hansen** adds that ", the verb that the NIV translates as *to follow Jewish customs* would be more accurately translated as "to become Jews." For the Gentiles would have to do more than follow a few Jewish customs; they would have to become Jews in order to have table fellowship with Jewish Christians who were following Jewish law. To put it simply, Peter's separation had violated his own conviction that the racial division between Jews and Gentiles should not exist in the church. As a consequence of his separation, Gentiles were not admitted to table fellowship with Jews in the church. And the only way for them to gain admission was to become Jews. If we feel that Paul was unnecessarily harsh or rude for rebuking Peter in public, we need to recall that the freedom of all Gentile Christians and the whole future of the Gentile mission was at stake. What if Peter's separation had set a precedent for the future so that all Gentile Christians really were required to become Jews? From a human perspective, such a precedent would have spelled the end of the Gentile church. It is not conceivable that Gentile churches could have been planted or would have grown if this requirement would have been enforced. And furthermore, if the division along racial lines had been allowed, the church would never have been able to exhibit a new humanity unified by faith in Christ, which transcends the racial and social divisions in the world. The truth of the gospel would be negated by such division." (Ibid)

**Wiersbe** points out that "There are five basic Christian doctrines that were being denied by Peter because of his separation from the Gentiles. (1) The unity of the church (v. 14). . . . (2) Justification by faith (vv. 15-16). . . . (3) Freedom from the law (vv. 17-18). . . . (4) The very gospel itself (vv. 19-20). . . . (5) The grace of God (v. 21)...Peter had experienced God's grace in his own salvation, and he had proclaimed God's grace in his own ministry. But when he withdrew from the Gentile Christian fellowship, he openly denied the grace of God. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

## Galatians 2:14-19 TODAY IN THE WORD

As the American Civil War dragged on, significant Christian revivals occurred among both Union and Confederate troops. One chaplain commented: "*The whole army is a vast field, ready and ripe to the harvest...The susceptibility of the soldiery to the gospel is wonderful...With the simplicity of little children, they listen to and embrace the truth.*" Lifestyles changed as well. As soldiers trusted Christ, they abandoned the profanity, gambling, drinking, sexual immorality and petty thievery that had up to that time characterized many army units. The gospel changes lives. For the soldiers to return to their old ways would have been a backward step of hypocrisy. So when Peter stepped back toward legalism, Paul had to confront him for the sake of the gospel. Paul challenged Peter (Gal 2:14): If you, a born Jew, live like a Gentile, why do you now by example compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Obligation to law-keeping would not be ""in line with the truth of the gospel"" or the pronouncements of the Council of Jerusalem.

In fact, no one can be justified by observing the law (Gal 2:16). The law was a standard of conduct so exacting that no one ever kept it wholly; therefore, all the law could do was condemn (cf. Ro 3:20). Justification, or being declared righteous in God's eyes and released from any condemnation resulting from failure to keep the law, comes by faith in Christ (cf. Ro 3:21-24).

The law demanded death for lawbreakers: all stood condemned to death for their sins. The solution? The Lord of glory became incarnate and paid the penalty. Once any law has exacted the death penalty, it cannot do so again. If we are joined to Christ by faith in His finished work, we share in His fulfillment of the righteous demands of the law. The law has killed Him and us, and we are no longer subject to the law.

APPLY THE WORD Where did Peter go wrong in his behavior? What made him turn from living by grace to living by law? One factor was peer pressure. He didn't want to be thought poorly of by the Judaizers. Peer pressure is a powerful force. ""Everybody's doing it,"" the saying goes. And Peter in turn set a bad example and led others astray. Had he taken a stand, he might have exerted ""positive peer pressure.""

## Galatians 2:15 "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;"

Greek: Hēmeis phusei (by birth) Ioudaioi kai ouk ex ethnōn hamartōloi

Amplified: [I went on to say] Although we ourselves (you and I) are Jews by birth and not Gentile (heathen) sinners,

Phillips And then I went on to explain that we, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners.

Wuest As for us, we are Jews by nature, and not sinners of Gentile origin. [Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission

NET Galatians 2:15 We are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners,

GNT Galatians 2:15 με ς φ σει ουδ αι κ α ο κ ξ εν ν μαρτωλο

NLT Galatians 2:15 "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles.

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

ESV Galatians 2:15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

ASV Galatians 2:15 We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

CSB Galatians 2:15 We who are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners"

NIV Galatians 2:15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners'

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

NRS Galatians 2:15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

YLT Galatians 2:15 we by nature Jews, and not sinners of the nations,

NAB Galatians 2:15 We, who are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles,

NJB Galatians 2:15 We who were born Jews and not gentile sinners

GWN Galatians 2:15 We are Jewish by birth, not sinners from other nations.

BBE Galatians 2:15 We being Jews by birth, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

- **We are Jews by nature:** Mt 3:7-9 Joh 8:39-41 Ro 4:16 Eph 2:3
- **not sinners from among the Gentiles** Mt 9:11 Mk 7:26-28 Ac 22:21 Ro 3:9 Eph 2:11,12 Tit 3:3
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL GREAT TREATISE ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

It is fascinating to see God's omnipotent, omniscient hand take the failure of Peter to stand firm on the truth of the Gospel and to use Peter's failure as the launching pad into one of the great sections in all of Scripture on the **doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone!** God uses the negative event and works it out for good (Ro 8:28<sup>e</sup>, Ge 50:20)! Who else could do that but God!

**John MacArthur** emphasizes the vital importance of Galatians 2:15-21

Now this is (Ed: Peter's failure and public rebuke)...**a premise on which Paul bases a tremendous theological statement**...Paul really takes off in...Gal 2:15-21, which could be studied and studied and studied and perhaps never plumbed...(for it is) very difficult to untangle what he is saying because he is emotional, especially in the first part of Galatians...In this little section from Gal 2:15-21, we are introduced to some tremendous Pauline terms. For example, we run into the term [pistis](#), or **faith**, which becomes such a prominent word in the vocabulary of Paul. Then we run into the word **nomos**, which translates "law," another prominent word. But above and beyond those words, we run into another word that becomes a cardinal word not only in Christianity, but in Paul's mind, and his heart and his writing. And that is the word "**justification**." And I believe this, that no one understands Christianity who does not understand **justification**. Now you may not understand what that term means, but you have got to understand the concept or you can never understand Christianity or be saved. The verb form of **justification** ([dikaioo](#)) appears three times in Gal 2:16, one time in Gal 2:17, and the noun form [dikaiosune](#) = "righteousness") appears in Gal 2:21. So **justification** is (used) at least five times in these verses....**The great doctrine of justification by faith alone is introduced**...in the context of his rebuke to Peter because this is the reason he rebukes Peter. He says, **Peter, I'm rebuking you because you're violating the cardinal doctrine of Christianity. By what you're doing, you're condoning legalism. You're condoning a faith-works system.**" And he is saying, in effect, "Now, Peter, listen. I'm not just asking you a question; I'm going to tell you *why* I'm posing this question to you." And the *why*, of course, is based on the doctrine of justification. **Martin Luther** said, "*If the article of justification be once lost, then all Christian doctrine is lost.*" **You ask "What is the doctrine of justification?" It is the good news that sinful men, sinful women can be brought into the acceptance of God, not because of their works, but simply through faith in Jesus Christ. That's the doctrine of justification.** ([Sermon](#)) (Bolding and words in parenthesis added)

**Wuest** on Galatians 2:15-21 - Authorities differ on the question as to whether verses 15-21 are part of Paul's words to Peter in the hearing of the Antioch church, or whether Paul's words in verse 14 are all that is reported of what he said to him on that occasion, and that Gal 2:15-21 are specially written to the Galatians as an answer to the question of Paul. The matter is not important, but the writer leans toward the opinion that they are part of what Paul said to Peter, and for the following reasons. The bare reproach of Gal 2:14 would hardly be in keeping with the serious nature of the trouble at Antioch. Again, it would be too brief an extract from Paul's words to Peter, to show the Galatians that Paul had really come to grips with Peter on the question at issue. In the third place, Paul in Gal 3:1+ resumes his direct words to the Galatians in the expression "O foolish Galatians." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles** - NLT = "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles." **Jews by nature** simply means they were born to Jewish parents. **Sinners** is used here as more of a generic description or name for **Gentiles**. Paul was not saying that he, Peter, Barnabas and the other Jewish Christians were not "sinners." In fact Paul uses this same descriptive word **sinners** in Galatians 2:17 writing "we (JEWS) ourselves have also been found **sinners** ([hamartolos](#))."

**MacArthur** has an additional thought on **sinners from among 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. (MacArthur Study Bible)

**Max Anders** says the phrase **sinners from among the Gentiles** "was probably spoken in irony. Quite often, the Jews could not mention Gentiles without calling them "Gentile sinners." Yet, in Paul's eyes, the sinners were the Judaizers, not the Gentiles, Christian believers in his church." (HNTC-Galatians)

**We** - Paul is referring to the believing Jews. **We** is emphatic which in turn emphasizes the sharp contrast which Paul is about to make between the Jew and the Gentile. Notice that Paul includes himself with Peter, Barnabas and the Jewish Christians in the church at Antioch and places them in contrast to the Gentile believers.

**MacArthur** explains why Paul begins with emphasis on their Jewishness - **We** know the law as a way of life from the time we were born, circumcised the eighth day. **We** know what it is to live under the system of law. **We** know what it is to endeavor to gain approval. **We** know what it is to be restrained by certain forbidden things under the Mosaic economy. **We** know what it is to obey ceremonial ritual. ([Sermon](#))

**Jews** (2453) ([Ioudaios](#) derived from Hebrew **Yehudi** = a member of the tribe of Judah) is an adjective that generally refers to one who belongs to the Jewish race with focus on adherence to Mosaic tradition (Acts 10:28+, Acts 22:3+) as opposed to Gentiles.

**Sinners** (268) ([hamartolos](#) from [hamartano](#) = deviate, miss the mark which some lexicons say is from **a** = negative + **meiromai** = attain thus not to attain, not to arrive at the goal) is an adjective (Ro 7:13+) that is often used as a noun (as here in Galatians 2:15, cp Ro 5:19+) to describe those who are continual err from God's way, constantly missing His mark, habitually living in opposition to His will.

**Wuest** agrees adding that "the word **sinners** is not here used in its strict sense where it speaks of persons guilty of sin and thus not righteous, but as it is often used in the New Testament, of persons from the point of view of the speaker...The phrase "publicans and **sinners**" is an example. It was the Pharisaic point of view in relation to persons guilty of specific violations of the law. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**HCSB Study Bible** on **sinners** - Theologically, Paul knew all people (not just Gentiles) are **sinners** (Ro 3:23). He was likely using a phrase (**Gentile sinners**) that his opponents, who were **Jews by birth** and apparently conceited about it, used to describe non-Jews. (Ed: In other words, in the minds of the Jews, Gentiles were considered to be **sinners** by nature because they had no Law to guide them, something the Jews did possess).

**Steve Lewis** - When they became aware of Christ's work on their behalf, the Jews who thought they were not **sinners** (like pagan Gentiles), found that they really were **sinners**. But those who have been justified by faith in Christ should act in a way that is consistent with their beliefs. They should not attempt to rebuild the things that were never able to justify them before God! The effect of being justified by faith alone is to make a person dead to the law. Since he is now truly alive, he can really live for God! Justification by faith also brings the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit into the life of the believer. The impact of teaching the necessity of obeying the Jewish Law was to destroy the doctrine of the gospel and to make the death of Christ useless! ([Galatians 2:11-21 Paul Confronts Peter in Antioch](#))

---

### Galatians 2:15-21 TODAY IN THE WORD

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! - Galatians 2:21

In Jewish tradition, a meal shared together has been considered something sacred. The dietary laws of the Old Testament were a means to consecrate the table, the food, and the participants of the meal. For Jewish followers of Jesus who maintained many of these traditions, they struggled to understand how to share meals with Gentiles. The very act of sharing a meal with Gentiles required significant compromise with everything they had thought was important. Jews who followed Christ were never forbidden to practice their Jewish customs. They weren't commanded to give up the practice of circumcision or abandon all of their dietary restrictions. But it proved problematic that their Gentile brothers and sisters in the faith lived differently. One proposal, as we've seen from those belonging to the circumcision party, was to have all Gentile believers circumcised. Then, having received the sign of the covenant, these Gentiles could be considered full-fledged members of God's family. That would solve the problem of sharing meals with them.

Paul diametrically opposed any such proposal! That's not the gospel, he argued! We're not members of God's family because we follow the law, Paul reasoned. A new era has dawned. Jesus has come! And it's faith in this Jesus of Nazareth that makes us members of God's family. Gone are the old distinctions of "Jew" and "Gentile" (sinner), as if Jews have insider status and Gentiles don't. And let's face it, Paul noted: We've already all been eating with Gentiles. If now, for some reason, we pull away and refuse to, we only admit that we're guilty of the very law we're trying to resurrect.

What matters most is the cross of Jesus Christ, and because of the cross, Paul asserted that he lived differently. All believers live by faith in this Jesus and in the knowledge of His love and sacrificial death and resurrection. All followers must recognize the grace of God afforded through Jesus, so as not to treat it as rubbish. If it's true that Torah and circumcision make us members of God's family, then Christ died for nothing!

APPLY THE WORD - What does it mean in your life to be crucified to Christ? This process of transformation and surrender is never easy. But holding on to our way of doing things or our comfortable routines will cost us much more. Consider writing down the phrase, "God loved me and gave Himself for me," and post it somewhere where you can meditate on it often. We can more easily let go of our false security and piety when we realize that we are embracing the redeeming love of our Savior.

**Galatians 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.**

Greek: eidotes (V-RPA-NMP) de hoti ou dikaioutai (is justified - V-PIM/P-3S) anthrōpos ex ergōn nomou ean mē dia pisteōs Christou Iēsou kai hēmeis eis Christon Iēsoun episteusamen (V-AIA-1P) hina dikaiōthōmen (we might be justified - V-ASP-1P) ek pisteōs Christou kai oux ek ergōn nomou hoti (because) ex ergōn nomou ou dikaiōthēsetai (V-FIP-3S) pasa sarx



Amplified: Yet we know that a man is justified or reckoned righteous and in right standing with God not by works of the Law, but [only] through faith and [absolute] reliance on and adherence to and trust in Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). [Therefore] even we [ourselves] have believed on Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law [for we cannot be justified by any observance of the ritual of the Law given by Moses], because by keeping legal rituals and by works no human being can ever be justified (declared righteous and put in right standing with God).

Phillips And then I went on to explain that we, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that a man is justified not by performing what the Law commands but by faith in Jesus Christ. We ourselves are justified by our faith and not by our obedience to the Law, for we have recognised that no one can achieve justification by doing the "works of the Law".

Wuest And knowing that a man is not justified by law works but only through faith in Christ Jesus, we also placed our trust in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by law works, because by law works there shall no flesh be justified. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by the faithfulness of Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

GNT ε δ τε ς [δ] τ ο δικαιο ται νθρωπος ξ ργων ν μου ν μ δι π στεως ησο Χριστο , κα με ς ε ς Χριστ ν ησο ν πιστε σσμεν , να δικαιωθ μεν κ π στεως Χριστο κα ο κ ξ ργων ν μου , τι ξ ργων ν μου ο δικαιωθ σται π σα σ ρξ.

NLT Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

KJV 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.

ESV yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

ASV yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

CSB know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified.

NIV know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

NKJ "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

NRS yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

YLT having known also that a man is not declared righteous by works of law, if not through the faith of Jesus Christ, also we in Christ Jesus did believe, that we might be declared righteous by the faith of Christ, and not by works of law, wherefore declared righteous by works of law shall be no flesh.'

NAB (yet) who know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

NJB have nevertheless learnt that someone is reckoned as upright not by practising the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ; and we too came to believe in Christ Jesus so as to be reckoned as upright by faith in Christ and not by practising the Law: since no human being can be found upright by keeping the Law.

GWN Yet, we know that people don't receive God's approval because of their own efforts to live according to a set of standards, but only by believing in Jesus Christ. So we also believed in Jesus Christ in order to receive God's approval by faith in Christ and not because of our own efforts. People won't receive God's approval because of their own efforts to live according to a set of standards.

BBE Being conscious that a man does not get righteousness by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we had faith in Christ Jesus, so that we might get righteousness by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law will no flesh get righteousness.

- **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law** - Ga 2:19 Gal 3:10-12 Gal 5:4 Job 9:2,3,29 25:4 Ps 130:3,4 Lu 10:25-29 Ac 13:38,39 Ro 3:19,20,27,28 4:2,13-15 Php 3:9
- **but through faith in Christ Jesus**: Ga 3:13,14,22-24 4:5 Ro 1:17 3:21-26,28,30 4:5,6,24,25 5:1,2,8,9 Ro 8:3,30-34 1Co 6:11 2Co 5:19-21 Php 3:9 Heb 7:18,19
- **even we have believed in Christ Jesus**: Ga 2:20 John 6:68,69 20:31 Ac 4:12 1Pe 1:2,8,9,18-21 2:24 3:18 2Pe 1:1 1Jn 1:7 2:1,2 Rev 7:9,14
- **since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified** Ga 3:11 Ps 143:2
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JUSTIFICATION NOT BY WORKS BUT ONLY BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

In Galatians 2:15-16 Paul clearly states what justification is and in Galatians 2:17-21 he defends this great doctrine.

Since this verse is repetitious and can be somewhat confusing here is a summary of what Paul is saying. He is declaring that salvation is only through faith in Christ and not by keeping the law and he says it three times each with a slightly different sense:

- (1) THE GENERAL TRUTH: **nevertheless knowing that A MAN is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,**
- (2) THE PERSONAL TRUTH: **even WE have believed in Christ Jesus, so that WE may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law;**
- (3) THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH: **since by the works of the Law NO FLESH will be justified.**

**Nevertheless (de)** - "notwithstanding that we are Jews, and "rest upon, and glory in, the law," Romans 2:17–23." (Vine)

**Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law** - First the negative, and then the positive! In simple terms Paul states that a man can do no works to warrant God declaring him "not guilty." No quality or quantity of work done by a man will result in God giving that man an acquittal for the sins he has committed. No amount of obedience to the Law (other than perfect which is impossible - Jas 2:10+) will result in being declared right or righteous before God. As **Campbell** says "Negatively, Paul has rebuffed the false teachings of the Judaizers which Peter had supported by his behavior in Antioch. Positively, he has presented the true, grace path to righteousness." (BKC)

**Spurgeon** explains why no man is **justified by works of the law** - No mere man can keep the law; no mere man has ever done so. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). As an absolutely perfect obedience is demanded by the law, which knows nothing of mercy, we fly from the law to obtain salvation by the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

And so this passage Paul clearly contrasts the two ways men have sought to be **justified** before God - law and works versus grace and faith. It could not be more succinctly stated! Notice Paul's repetition **works of the Law** occurs three times - at the beginning, in the middle and at the end - doing **works of the Law** does not work to achieve justification! In the middle section again three times Paul emphasizes the role **faith** - "but through faith in Christ Jesus," "even we (Jews) have believed in Christ Jesus," and "justified by faith in Christ." **The three uses of Law are countered by three uses of Christ (Christ Jesus twice and Christ once).**

**Phil Newton** asks "Why does Paul go to such great lengths to repeat this truth over and over? I believe it is because of our natural propensity for trusting in ourselves and our own merit for our standing with God. There is a battle raging today throughout the world in the heads and hearts of multitudes of people, who just will not accept the fact that they can do absolutely nothing to justify themselves before God! ([Galatians 2:17-19 Justified by Faith 4](#)) see also [Galatians 2:11-16 Justified by Faith \(1\)](#) [Galatians 2:15-16 Justified by Faith \(2\)](#)

**Knowing (1492) (eido)** means to know by perception and is not a tentative knowing but a knowing for certain! **Knowing** is plural (we) indicating that this truth is something Paul, Peter, Barnabas and the other Jewish believers know beyond a shadow of a doubt. They had been under the works of the law all their life and found that that system did not work! Their works had not made them right before God! We have a phrase "been there, done that," to which Paul would add "doesn't work!"

**That a man** (anthropos) here speaks of each and every member of the entire human race without reference to sex or nationality. **Vine** adds that "The apostle's use of the word **man** serves to remind his readers of the solidarity of the race; the Judaizers (WHO SOUGHT TO SEPARATE FROM GENTILES) had too readily forgotten that a common humanity underlies all merely national distinctions."

**Is not justified by works of the Law - Amplified** = "a man is justified or reckoned righteous and in right standing with God not by works of the Law." **Phillips** paraphrase - "not by performing what the Law commands." "This is the primary truth to be proclaimed by every Christian ministry. It is the foundation-stone of all gospel preaching; and yet, somehow or other, such is the hardness of the human heart, that it is the most difficult thing to induce our hearers to build on this foundation. Many of them are always trying to lean upon their own works, and so struggling to get back under the old legal dispensation, instead of rejoicing

in the liberty of the dispensation of grace. One objection to the doctrine of grace rather than the doctrine of law is this, that some think it will lead to sin." (Spurgeon)

**Justified** (1344) see discussion below on [dikaioo](#) which is used 3 times in Galatians 2:16. Justified is the opposite of condemned. **MacArthur** says **justified** as a term that "was originally used forensically of a judge's declaring an accused person not guilty and right before the law. It was the opposite of being declared guilty and condemned. Throughout Scripture **justification** refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in Him. It is the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with Himself—forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting him on the basis of nothing but trust in the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ."

#### Related Resources:

- [What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?](#)
- [Why is justification by faith such an important doctrine?](#)

Paul made a similar statement regarding the ineffectiveness of **works of the Law** to make a person right before God...

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under (subject, under the power of) the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God (the law makes all men accountable because all have disobeyed it); because **by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight** for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin (One purpose of the Law is like a mirror we look into and see our true nature as sinners who commit sin! And like a mirror the law can only show our "dirt" but it cannot clean us!)... For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from **works of the Law**. (Ro 3:19-20+, Ro 3:28+)

**Works of the Law** is found 8x in 6v - Ro 3:20, Ro 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal 3:2, Gal 3:5, Gal 3:10

Paul is saying that they (Peter, Barnabas, et al) all knew that attempts to keep the Law could not make a person perfectly righteous before God. The reason of course is that the heart of the problem is man's depraved heart. External works do not change one's sin sick heart! Our problem is what we **are**, not what we **do**. What we **do** is just the fruit of what we **are** in our heart. It follows that what fallen man needs is a "heart transplant," a new heart.

## JUSTIFIED THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

**But through** - This is surely one of the most important contrasts or "changes of direction" in the entire Bible, as it definitively differentiates between how most of mankind thinks they can be saved (by works) versus how God specifies is the only way to be saved (by faith).

**But through faith in Christ Jesus** - **Through** is the preposition [dia](#) and describes the channel through which we are justified, through which we are saved - it is by faith alone in Christ alone! The way of salvation is clearly stated. Man is justified **through faith in Christ Jesus**. Man is declared righteous (in right standing) before God through his belief in Christ Jesus. The key that unlocks the door to the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life is **faith**, and not just faith but faith which is **in Christ Jesus**.

Paul states the need for **faith in Christ** three times in this one verse - **faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ**. Is there any doubt about what Paul wants to emphasize? Notice it is faith in Christ PLUS NOTHING! Anything added to Christ is NOT the Gospel and will not save one's soul! Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone! It is notable that the second use (we have believed in Christ Jesus) is more literally "we have believed **into** (eis) Christ Jesus." You ask "so what?" **Stott** answers that the preposition [eis](#) signifies their faith "is an act of committal, not just assenting to the fact that Jesus lived and died, but running to Him for refuge and calling on Him for mercy." ([Ibid](#))

**Wiersbe** adds this note on **faith** - "**How can a man be in the right** (Lxx = [dikaiois](#) = righteous, just) **before God**?" (Job 9:2) was a vital question, because the answer determined eternal consequences. "The just shall live by his **faith**" (Hab. 2:4+) is God's answer; and it was this truth that liberated Martin Luther from religious bondage and fear. So important is this concept that three New Testament books explain it to us: Romans (Ro 1:17), Galatians (Gal 3:11), and Hebrews (Heb 10:38). Romans explains the meaning of "**the just**"; Galatians explains "**shall live**"; and Hebrews explains "**by faith**."

**Faith** (4102) ([pistis](#)) is "the hand which grasps" (Maclaren) and is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things as well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As **faith** relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through personal belief in Jesus Christ and no other way. It is critically important to understand that Biblical faith is not simply mental assent or acquiescence to a set of Bible facts regarding Jesus. It is not enough to simply believe Jesus lived and died. There are many people who possess this superficial type of "faith," but this is not genuine faith that brings about salvation of one's soul. ([See below for the note on the related verb pisteuo](#))

**Wayne Grudem** defines **faith** that saves one's soul and opens the door to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as follows -

**Saving faith** is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me....The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ....Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word **trust** is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "**faith**" or "**belief**." The reason is that we can "**believe**" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. ([Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#))

Now we move from Paul's general statement to the second part of this passage (2), the more personal statement:

- (1) THE GENERAL TRUTH: **nevertheless knowing that A MAN is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,**
- (2) THE PERSONAL TRUTH: **even WE have believed in Christ Jesus, so that WE may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law;**
- (3) THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH: **since by the works of the Law NO FLESH will be justified.**

**Even we have believed in Christ Jesus** - **Even we** refers to **we** Jews who had access to the Law unlike the Gentiles who did not know the Law. And the phrase **have believed** speaks of an act of commitment and not just agreeing with a set of facts that Jesus lived and died saying, "That's fine, I believe it," but actually believing **into** (eis) Christ, committing oneself to Him (See Vine's explanation below).

**Stott** comments on "even we have believed in Christ Jesus" that Paul is saying "our certainty about the Gospel is more than intellectual; we have proved it personally in our own experience. This is an important addition. It shows that Paul is propounding a doctrine which he has himself put to the test. 'We know it,' he says, 'and we have ourselves believed in Christ, in order to prove it.'" ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Believed** (4100) ([pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#); [pistos](#); see related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone.

**W E Vine** defines [pisteuo](#) as consisting of

- (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")
- (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe [pisteuo] in His name") and
- (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender. (See discussion of the [obedience of faith](#))

**So that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law** - **So that** (hina) introduces a purpose clause, the primary purpose of everything Paul is saying in this section! **We** (Jews) may receive "a favorable verdict before God on judgment day" (Morris).

**Justified** (1344) ([dikaioo](#) from [dike](#) = right, expected behavior or conformity, not one's own standard, but an imposed standard with prescribed punishment for nonconformity) [Click](#) more discussion of [dikaioo](#) primarily means to deem to be right, to show or declare to be right. **Dikaioo** describes the act by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** was a legal term having to do with the law and the courtroom, and it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. In this context it Paul and Peter (and other Jewish believers) received from God a "not guilty" verdict (so to speak). This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in this section and in Romans 3:21-5:11 where he again explains the doctrine of justification.

**Wuest** writes that **dikaioo** is "the act of God it justifying a believing sinner consists of taking away his guilt and its penalty, since Christ bore both on the cross, and the [imputation](#) of a righteousness, even Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the believer stands not only guiltless and uncondemned for time and eternity, but also positively righteous in the sight of the eternal laws of God." (See Kenneth Wuest's in depth discussion of Justify).

#### Related Resource:

- [Why does Christ's righteousness need to be imputed to us?](#)

**Spurgeon** on **justified through faith** - This is the primary truth to be proclaimed by the Christian ministry. It is the foundation stone of all Gospel preaching. And yet, somehow or other, such is the hardness of the human heart that it is the most difficult thing to induce our hearers to build on this foundation. Many of them are always trying to lean upon their own works, and so struggling to get back under the old legal dispensation, instead of rejoicing in the liberty of the dispensation of grace.

**Martin Luther** on justification by faith - This is the truth of the Gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consisteth. Most necessary it is, therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it unto others, and beat it into their heads continually.

**Works of the law** - By obedience to the law of God, as when one abstains from doing things God prohibits and by doing those things He prescribes. The writer of Hebrews calls these "dead works" (Heb 9:14) for they are "unproductive" in regard to achieving justification before God.

As an aside, how are **works** related to salvation. As someone has said, faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone. In other words faith is shown to be genuine by the fruit it bears. Good fruit testifies to a good root so to speak. The fruit does not save the root, but simply demonstrates that there is a root of real faith. (For more discussion on the relationship of saving faith and works see James 2:14-23 - Links to verse by verse notes: [James 2:14](#) ; [James 2:15](#); [James 2:16](#); [James 2:17](#); [James 2:18](#); [James 2:19](#); [James 2:20](#); [James 2:21](#); [James 2:22](#); [James 2:23](#); [James 2:24](#); [James 2:25](#); [James 2:26](#)

**MacArthur** says "Now Paul says, we're legalistic experts and we found out one thing through our law: It doesn't work. It doesn't bring you to God."

Now we move from to Paul's third and final universal statement:

- (1) THE GENERAL TRUTH: **nevertheless knowing that A MAN is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,**
- (2) THE PERSONAL TRUTH: **even WE have believed in Christ Jesus, so that WE may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law;**
- (3) THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH: **since by the works of the Law NO FLESH will be justified.**

**Universal** means a proposition that asserts something that is true of all members of a class; applicable to or common to all members of a group.

**Since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified** - More literally this reads "no justification all flesh." "No" is absolute negation. Absolutely none! The word "All" in "all flesh" is pas which means all without exceptions and so "universal."

In Ecclesiastes 7:20 Solomon wrote "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."

**John Stott** explains that the general truth and the personal truth he has described are now confirmed by Scripture and to do this Paul quotes "Psalm 143:2 (also in Ro 3:20) which says "because by works of the law shall no one be justified." The Greek expression is even more striking than the English. It refers to 'all flesh', mankind without exception. Whatever our religious upbringing, educational background, social status or racial origin, the way of salvation is the same. None can be justified by works of the law; **all flesh** must be justified through faith in Christ. It would be hard to find a more forceful statement of the doctrine of justification than this (REFERRING TO GALATIANS 2:16). It is insisted upon by the two leading apostles (**we know**), confirmed from their own experience (**we have believed**), and endorsed by the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament (**by works of the law shall no one be justified**). With this threefold guarantee we should accept the **biblical doctrine of justification** and not let our natural self-righteousness keep us from faith in Christ. ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Related Resources:**

- [What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?](#)
- [Why is justification by faith such an important doctrine?](#)

**Spurgeon** - How boldly is this stated! Faith alone and not works justify the soul before God. He who does not believe this rejects the gospel. Nothing is more plainly revealed in Scripture than this: that by the works of the law shall no man be justified. Yet men in some shape or other stick to the hope of legal righteousness. They will have it that they must prepare for grace, or assist mercy, or in some degree deserve eternal life. They prefer their own flattering prejudices to the declaration of the heart-searching God....A man may fancy that he is prospering in business, and yet he may be going back in the world. If he does not face his books or take stock, he may be living in a fool's paradise, spending largely when on the verge of bankruptcy. Many think well of themselves because they never think seriously. They do not look below the surface, and hence they are deceived by appearances. The most troublesome business to many men is thought. **The last thing they will do is to weigh their actions, or test their motives, or ponder their ways, to see whether things are right with them.**

**Works of the Law** - This is not restricted to the 10 Commandments but includes the ceremonial expressions, practice of circumcision, holy days, sacrifices. Phil Newton goes on to explain how this applies not just to Jews but to all mankind...

Someone might argue, 'I don't even know all of those laws! How can I possibly be trying to justify myself by things which I don't even understand?' By way of application, let me express it like this: *anything which we do to gain approval with God which attempts to circumvent the necessity of the cross of Christ* falls within the range of the works of the Law, at least in terms of application. Here is where people do all sorts of things in order to convince themselves that God is now obligated to them. Some even go through great suffering or difficult ordeals in life with the view that because they have suffered so much in this life, God is now obligated to give them a right standing with Him in eternity. I recall the jackets worn by a number of soldiers returning from Vietnam in the 70's, that declared, 'I've already gone to Hell, so now I can go to Heaven'. The concept they had in mind was that their service in Vietnam accrued merit for them since it was such a horrible time of suffering, therefore they deserved to go to Heaven. It seems in the media and among politicians that we have most people passing through tragedies assigned to Heaven by virtue of their sufferings. It is a popular thought that if you have endured suffering in this life, then nothing more will be required of you beyond this life. You have a "right" to Heaven by virtue of what you endured. Such a view, however, denies the depths of one's own sinfulness and the degree of man's enmity against God. It is a denial of the infinite righteousness and holiness of God. It is actually a subtle form of idolatry. For when a person sets his own wisdom above the declaration of God in the gospel, he is denying God and exalting himself as wiser than God. So the conclusion we must see is that no one can be justified by anything which he has done. Justification takes place only by faith and that through Christ's righteousness on the sinner's behalf and His satisfaction of God's requirements for sinners at the cross. Such justification must be attributed completely to the grace of God. But when you make a statement like this, there is immediate confusion on the part of those who are seeking to justify themselves through their own works of righteousness. So Paul addresses this matter in the continuation of his arguments ([Go on to Gal 2:17](#)).

---

**Peter Kennedy - Yours for the Asking**

"Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law because by observing the law no one will be justified."—Galatians 2:16

When the Spanish-American War broke out Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, was prepared to offer relief. A Red Cross team of doctors and nurses, and fourteen hundred tons of supplies arrived in Santiago, Cuba, as the fighting began. The American and Cuban field hospitals were located side by side and their conditions were deplorable. The American military surgeons refused the Red Cross's offers of help so Barton and her team gave aid to the Cubans.

The Americans soon realized that the Cuban wounded were better taken care of than the American casualties. Under pressure, the American chief surgeon asked Barton for Red Cross help.

Soon after the Battle of San Juan Hill, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (the future president of the United States) came to Barton and offered to buy food and medicine for the sick and wounded Rough Riders. Barton refused. Roosevelt could not understand. He cared about his men and was willing to pay for the supplies out of his own funds. So Roosevelt went to the surgeon in charge who told him, "Colonel, just ask for it" Roosevelt smiled—now he understood—the provisions were not for sale. "I will ask for it," he said. He did so and received the supplies at once.

The work of Jesus Christ is graciously given as a gift. We only need ask. Have you placed your faith in Christ? Today in prayer thank God that through faith in Jesus Christ you are healed from sin. (From Generation to Generation)

"He has taken our place and died in our stead; He has met the descending stroke of justice, which would have fallen on our own heads if He had not interposed."—Albert Barnes

**Galatians 2:17 "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!**

Greek: ei de zētountes (V-PPA-NMP) [e] dikaiōthēnai (V-ANP) en Christō heurethēmen (have been found - V-AIP-1P) kai autoi hamartōloi ara ([is] then) Christos hamartias diakonos mē genoito

Amplified: But if, in our desire and endeavor to be justified in Christ [to be declared righteous and put in right standing with God wholly and solely through Christ], we have shown ourselves sinners also and convicted of sin, does that make Christ a minister (a party and contributor) to our sin? Banish the thought! [Of course not!]

Phillips Now if, as we seek the real truth about justification, we find we are as much sinners as the Gentiles, does that mean that Christ makes us sinners? Of course not!

Wuest But if, as is the case, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we (Jews) ourselves also were found to be sinners, is Christ therefore a promoter of sin? Away with the thought. [Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

NET Galatians 2:17 But if while seeking to be justified in Christ we ourselves have also been found to be sinners, is Christ then one who encourages sin? Absolutely not!

GNT Galatians 2:17 ε δ ζητο ντες δικαιοθ ναι ν Χριστ ε ρθημεν κα ατο μαρτωλο , ρα Χριστ ς μαρτ ας δι κονος; μ γ νοιτο.

NLT Galatians 2:17 But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not!

KJV 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.

ESV Galatians 2:17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

ASV Galatians 2:17 But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid.

CSB Galatians 2:17 But if we ourselves are also found to be "sinners" while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter of sin? Absolutely not!

NIV Galatians 2:17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!

NKJ Galatians 2:17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

NRS Galatians 2:17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

YLT Galatians 2:17 And if, seeking to be declared righteous in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is then Christ a ministrant of sin? let it not be!

NAB Galatians 2:17 But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? Of course not!

NJB Galatians 2:17 Now if we too are found to be sinners on the grounds that we seek our justification in Christ, it would surely follow that Christ was at the service of sin. Out of the question!

GWN Galatians 2:17 If we, the same people who are searching for God's approval in Christ, are still sinners, does that mean that Christ encourages us to sin? That's unthinkable!

BBE Galatians 2:17 But if, while we were desiring to get righteousness through Christ, we ourselves were seen to be sinners, is Christ a servant of sin? In no way!

- while seeking to be justified in Christ Ro 9:30-33 11:7
- we ourselves have also been found sinners: Ga 2:11 Ro 6:1,2 1Jn 3:8-10
- is Christ then a minister of sin? Mt 1:21 Ro 15:8 2Co 3:7-9 Heb 7:24-28 8:2 1Jn 3:5
- May it never be! Ro 3:4,6
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JUSTIFIED IN CHRIST

**But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! -We ourselves** refers to Paul and the other Jewish believers (like the **we** of Gal 2:15,16). **If** speaks of a fulfilled condition which could be paraphrased "if, as is the case." The idea of **seeking** ([zeleo](#)) in this context speaks of desiring to possess (cf Mt 6:33, Col 3:1)

I find this passage very difficult to interpret so will give a number of interpretations, some of which are similar and/or overlap.

**Howard Vos** - Verse 17 is very difficult to interpret and numerous views have been given. One that seems to fit the tenor of the verse and the context goes like this: If we seek to be justified by Christ alone and no longer put ourselves under the restraints of the law, perhaps we are in this way giving license to sin. If free grace in Christ encourages men to continue in sin, then He is made a minister of sin. Paul finds such a view utterly repulsive and retorts with his characteristic "God forbid" ("perish the thought"). ([Everyman's Bible Commentary - Galatians: A Call to Christian Liberty](#))

**James Montgomery Boice** after discussing 5 possible interpretations gives the one he favors - A final interpretation is that Paul refers to the standard antinomian objection to the doctrine of justification by faith which, significantly enough, he also deals with elsewhere. This view is adopted by Ridderbos, Stamm, and Stott (in loc.). According to this interpretation, Paul would be answering the objection that to eliminate the law entirely as he is doing is to encourage godless living, living without norms. The argument would go, "Your doctrine of justification by faith is dangerous, for by eliminating the law you also eliminate a man's sense of moral responsibility. If a person can be accounted righteous simply by believing that Christ died for him, why then should he bother to keep the law or, for that matter, why should he bother to live by any standard of morality? There is no need to be good. The result of your doctrine is that men will believe in Christ but thereafter do as they desire." Paul's reply is abrupt. The form of his expression suggests that he was aware of the possibility that a Christian can (and that all Christians do) sin. But this is not the result of the doctrine of justification by faith, and therefore Christ is not responsible for it. Such a thought is abhorrent. "Absolutely not!" "God forbid!" If there is sin, as Paul acknowledges indirectly in the next verse, man himself is responsible ("I am a lawbreaker"). This view is preferred by the present writer because it reflects Paul's arguments elsewhere (cf. Rom 6-8) and it best explains the presence of the following verses, as the commentary indicates. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) - 1973)

**Robert Rapa** - It is clear that Paul's meaning for "sinners" should, like the "we," also be understood the same way in Gal 2:17 as in Gal 2:15. In the context of Paul's proposition, this is best understood as an ironic mechanism intended by Paul to make a strong statement about the "sinner" Gentile-like status of himself and the Jewish Christians. In other words, Paul, Peter, and perhaps others had exercised their freedom in Christ to "live like a Gentile" (Gal 2:14). Having in certain matters of diet and association decided not to live like Jews, they had become, from the Judaizers' perspective, "sinners" and "unclean." They had put themselves, in terms of such behavior, outside the Mosaic covenant, as the Gentiles were. They had eaten like and with the Gentiles and perhaps disregarded other portions of the law as well (cf. Burton, 125). In doing so, they made themselves and their incipient Christian movement liable to charges of antinomianism, which was in fact one of the difficulties facing Paul in the Galatian congregation. The fact that the Judaizers offered the nomistic lifestyle of Judaism as a ready solution to such apparent antinomian propensities complicated the issue for Paul. The opponents could use Paul's and Peter's behavior to claim that Christ was the promoter of sin. Their becoming "sinners," i.e., covenant breakers, from the Judaizers' perspective makes the Christ preached by Paul to be the champion of sinful behavior. This was, again, an actual charge leveled against Paul, seemingly with some success (cf. Ro. 3:31; 6:1, 15; 13:14). His resounding, "Absolutely not!" to the notion of Jesus' promotion of sinful behavior was intended to indicate just how far he wished to distance himself from such a preposterous contention. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) - 2007)

**William Hendriksen** gives his favorite of 3 interpretations he discusses "If the Judaizers are correct in maintaining that we, in seeking to be justified solely in Christ, and thus neglecting law, turn out to be gross sinners just like the Gentiles, then would you say that Christ, Who taught us this doctrine, is a sin-promoter?" In favor of this interpretation note the following: (a) It obviously suits the preceding context. In substance Paul is saying, "Peter and all of you who have followed his example, consider what you are doing! By your action you are really saying that Christ was wrong when he taught you: that it is not what enters a man from without that defiles him but rather what proceeds out of his heart (Matt. 15:1-20); that all meats are clean (Mark 7:19); and that men are saved by simply coming to him and trusting in him (Matt. 11:25-30; John 3:16). Is it really true, then, that Christ is a sin-promoter, that is, that he—by his teaching, example, death on the cross—makes you a greater sinner than you were already?" (b) It also establishes a smooth connection with the words which immediately follow. ([Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon](#))

**Grant Osborne** - Paul now further clarifies his point, using what is called a condition of fact (an "if" saying that assumes the truth of the statement to follow): "If, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews [inserted by the NIV for clarification] find ourselves to be sinners [which is indeed the case]." Some think this refers back to Paul's and Peter's conversions, when both realized that they, like the Gentiles, were sinners who could find forgiveness only in Christ. Others see this as a post-conversion experience when they fully realized that the law could not solve their sin problem and turned unequivocally to faith in Jesus. This would not, however, imply a second conversion. Paul was not referring to a conversion experience but to a later, fuller realization regarding their relationship to the law as Christians. Both views can make sense of the sentence, but I prefer the post-conversion interpretation because it fits the whole setting and argument of verses 15-21. Either way, however, Paul's emphasis is on the reality of sin. As he worked through the implications of the gospel and his own salvation, Paul realized that the law could not have removed the reality that he was a sinner in need of grace. The presence of "in Christ" with "justified" indicates the mystical union with Christ that ensues in the experience of justification. In realizing that justification takes place apart from keeping the law, Peter and Paul in the eyes of the Jews had become "sinners," just like the Gentiles who did not follow the law. At this point Paul points out a possible false conclusion ("Does this mean that Christ promotes sin?"), responding to his own rhetorical question with that strong negation made famous in his diatribes of Romans 3:4, 6 and others: "Absolutely not" (KJV: "God forbid")! If faith in Christ means abandoning the law, these Judaizers charged Paul, then following him means turning Jewish Christians into sinners like the Gentiles. Paul unequivocally rejects such a charge. Far from promoting sin, Christ resolves and negates its. ([Galatians Verse by Verse](#))

**John Stott** - Paul's critics argued like this: 'Your doctrine of justification through faith in Christ only, apart from the works of the law, is a highly dangerous doctrine. It fatally weakens a man's sense of moral responsibility. If he can be accepted through trusting in Christ, without any necessity to do good works, you are actually encouraging him to break the law, which is the vile heresy of "antinomianism".' People still argue like this today: 'If God justifies bad people, what is the point of being good? Can't we do as we like and live as we please?' Paul's first response to his critics is to deny their suggestion with hot indignation: 'God forbid' he says. ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**John MacArthur** - His first point was to show that, if the Judaizers were correct in their doctrine that believers are saved in part by keeping the ceremonial law of Moses and continue to be bound by that law to maintain their salvation, then, even before the Judaizers arrived in Antioch, Peter, Barnabas, and all the other Jewish believers, including Paul, had fallen back into the category of **sinners** by having freely eaten and fellowshiped with Gentile Christians. Paul's second point was even more devastating. "If you become **sinners** because of fellowshiping with your Gentile brothers," he implies, "then **Christ** Himself became a **minister of sin**, did he not?" How? Jesus had clearly taught that no food can spiritually contaminate a person, because food cannot affect the heart (Mark 7:19). Through the vision of the unclean animals and the dramatic conversion and anointing of Cornelius, the Lord had given Peter direct evidence that Gentile believers are in every way equal to Jewish believers (Acts 10). On many other occasions and in many other ways Jesus had taught that all those who belong to Him are one with Him and therefore one with each other. Shortly before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, Jesus earnestly and repeatedly prayed to His Father that those who believed in Him "may all be One; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us... that they may be one, just as We are One; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity" (John 17:21-23). But if the Judaizers were right, Paul pointed out, Jesus was wrong; if they taught the truth, He had taught falsehood and was thereby a **minister of sin!** Such an accusation must have shaken Peter to his bones. ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**John MacArthur** sermon - So Paul says, "Okay. If while seeking to be justified in Christ, we end up found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? If the Judaizers are right," – think with me on this – "if the Judaizers are right, then Christ set us up for sin, because He proclaims that salvation is through faith in Him alone. And if we do that, believe in Him, receive His grace, embrace it by faith, and now you Judaizers say because we're not keeping the Law we are sinners, then Christ set us free to lead us into sin. If the Judaizers are right, demanding that we, in seeking to be

justified by faith alone in Christ apart from works, are turning out to be sinners because we don't keep the Law, then are you going to say Christ made us sinners? "The gospel sets us free from the Law, free from the Law's tyranny, free from the Law's dominance, free from the Law's penalty. Now that Christ has set us free," – as he says in chapter 5, verse 1 – "you're saying to us that if we don't go back to the Law, Christ has made us sinners. So are you saying Christ is a minister of sin?" Now, remember, he's talking to Peter. He's talking to Peter and Barnabas, who's been a co-pastor with him for years. "What are you doing? You are condemning Christ." It's pretty bold stuff. Peter had a history of denying Christ, didn't he. "When you eat and function with Gentiles, and accept them in a gracious way as being brothers and sisters in Christ because of faith alone, you're right. But if you, Peter, Barnabas, and the rest, if you go along with the Judaizing legalists, then you're saying that our former liberty, your former liberty, the way you've been living since Acts 10 and the way you've been living in Antioch was sin; and therefore Christ freed you into sin. By telling you you're free from the Law, Christ made you a worse sinner than ever." Paul recoils from his own logic, because it's blasphemy, and says, "May it never be!" Mé genoito in the Greek. "No, no, no, no, no. Not possible. God forbid." No, Christ isn't the sin promoter here. The Judaizers are the sin promoters. ([Galatians 2:13-21 Keeping the Gospel Pure](#))

**Kenneth Wuest** - The Christian Jews, in seeking to be justified in Christ, were shown to be sinners just like and in the same class as the Gentiles. When they sought justification in Christ and thus by grace, it was an admission on their part that there is no justification by works, that the seeker is not justified, and is therefore a sinner. The attempt to be justified in Christ awakens the consciousness of sin, and compels the Jew to put himself on the plane of the Gentile. The Jew who calls the Gentile a sinner, in seeking to be justified by faith, is forced to admit that he is a sinner also. He has found that the law has failed him as a justifying agency. Paul repudiates the false assumption of the Judaizers who charged that Christ is the promoter and encourager of sin in that He causes the Jew to abandon the law as a justifying agency, and in doing so, puts himself on the common plane of a Gentile whom he calls a sinner and a dog. The Judaizers argued that in view of the fact that violation of the law is sin, therefore, abandonment of the law in an effort to be justified in Christ is also Sin. Thus Christ is the Promoter of sin. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

**S Lewis Johnson** - Paul is talking about clean and unclean meats, and he says, "If Peter and I, disregarding the law of clean and unclean meats, are violators of the law," sinners in that sense, "by seeking justification in Christ, is then Christ the promoter of sin?" In other words, we have turned from seeking salvation through observing the law. We have abandoned those legal prescriptions. Is Christ therefore a minister of sin? And he answers it accepting the premises but denying the conclusion, "God forbid." May it not come to be; perish the thought. And then the apostle explains, as a matter of fact he says, "I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." It is the person who goes back to the law seeking to build up again those old prescriptions done away in Christ, who is the real violator of the law. And so Peter's vacillating conduct of going back to the Old Testament distinctions of meats in Antioch makes Peter a transgressor. Christ is not the promoter of sin. It is Peter, who by his conduct is really the promoter of sin. ([Sermon](#))

**Max Anders** - The opponents to this message of grace argued that if people aren't under law then they will freely sin. They reasoned that people could believe in Christ but then live as they wanted and by their sinful actions make Christ a promoter of sin. Paul answers this accusation with an emphatic, "No!" Grace leads to freedom from sin's slavery to obey God, not license to disobey him. ([Holman New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Donald Campbell** - Paul's opponents argued, however, that since justification by faith eliminated the Law, it encouraged sinful living. A person could believe in Christ for salvation and then do as he pleased, having no need to do good works. Paul hotly denied the charge, especially noting that this made **Christ** the promoter of sin. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Marvin Vincent** - Paul assumes that this was actually the case: that, seeking to be justified in Christ, they were found to be sinners. To seek to be justified by Christ is an admission that there is no justification by works; that the seeker is unjustified, and therefore a sinner. The effort to attain justification by faith in Christ develops the consciousness of sin. It compels the seeker, whether Jew or Gentile, to put himself upon the common plane of sinners. The Jew who calls the Gentile a sinner, in seeking to be justified by faith, finds himself a sinner also. The law has failed him as a justifying agency. But Paul is careful to repudiate the false inference from this fact, stated in what immediately follows, namely, that Christ is a minister of sin. Minister of sin - A promoter of sin by causing us to abandon the law. ([Galatians 2 Commentary - Greek Word Studies](#))

**POSB** - The question is, "Could Christ be making us sinners by our trusting that we are justified by faith in Him alone?" Some argued that Paul was making Christ *minister of sin*. Their reasoning went like this: when men turned away from the law and trusted Christ for righteousness, Christ caused them to sin, for Christ made it easy for them to transgress the law. They said that Christ tore down the law, for He led men away from the law. He removed the restraints and barriers of the law; therefore, men became transgressors by rejecting the law. Paul simply says two things about this argument. First, God forbid! Second, the man who tries to keep the law makes himself a sinner, for it is the law that condemns him (Galatians 3:19). ([The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Galatians](#))

John Phillips - Well, let's listen in again on his conversation with Peter. "Now look here, Peter," we can almost hear him say, "we Jews discovered ourselves to be sinners when we sought the real truth about being justified by Christ. We discovered that we, too, had missed the mark (hamartōlos) just as badly as any Gentile. Now let me ask you a question. When Christ revealed to us our true condition as sinners, does that mean that He made us sinners? Nonsense! However, if I try to rebuild the whole structure of justification by law, if I put myself back under law after discovering the truth of justification through Christ, then I really do become a sinner (parabatēs), I really do become one who steps over the line. In other words, Peter, if I build again the things that I broke down to be justified by Christ, then I really do become a sinner. By yielding to faith in Christ as a means of salvation, we abandon law keeping as a means of being justified. We acknowledge that we are sinners, wholly dependent on God's grace. Jew and Gentile alike have no other way of being justified before God." ([Exploring Galatians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**Ryken** - The doctrine of justification by faith alone raises an obvious problem. If by his free grace God has already declared us righteous, then why bother to become a better person? What incentive do we have to live for God? The doctrine of justification seems irresponsible. It sounds, in fact, like winning the spiritual lottery. If God gives righteousness away for free, who will ever work for him again? Paul anticipates this objection by making it part of his argument. "But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin?" (Gal. 2:17). This is a fair question, and from the way he poses it, Paul seems to have something specific in mind. The clue is the word **sinners**," which Paul used back in Gal 2:15 to indicate the Jewish attitude toward Gentiles. The Gentiles were "sinners," not so much because they were immoral, but because they lived outside the boundaries of the law. According to the Judaizers, this was precisely the problem with Peter and Paul: they had become outlaws. In their personal habits, they were living like Gentile **sinners** rather than like Jews. They used to keep the law in all its detail. Now they were doing things like eating unholiness and unclean meats. Hence the accusation that they were making Jesus a servant of sin, almost as if he were doing promotional work for the devil. Peter and Paul had sought to be justified by faith in Christ. This included giving up on the law as a way to get right with God. Whereas before they had always been law-abiding Jews, they were sinking to the level of pagans. When the Judaizers discovered that Peter and Paul were living like "Gentile sinners," they reached the obvious conclusion: being justified by faith causes people to sin in the name of Christ. And if Peter and Paul were guilty of this charge, then so were the Gentiles. They had come to faith in Christ, but they were still living like so-called sinners. Someone needed to hold them to a higher moral standard, and the Judaizers were just the men to do it! What is the best way to answer this line of thinking? It must be admitted that Christians do not always make good advertisements for Christianity. When this is the case, it helps to remember that by definition, all Christians are sinners. Martin Luther said, "A Christian is not someone who has no sin or feels no sin; he is someone to whom, because of his faith in Christ, God does not impute his sin." This is the crucial difference. Christians are sinners too, but their sins do not count against them. Therefore, with the possible exception of the prison system, the church is the only institution in the world for bad people. This does not mean, however, that God himself is in the business of sin. "Certainly not!" Paul says (Gal. 2:17). God forbid! Or to put it in the vernacular, "No way!" Perish the thought that Christ is a "servant of sin," as if his grace is somehow to be blamed for my guilt. When God justifies sinners by faith, he is not aiding and abetting their sin. The very suggestion is blasphemous. God cannot sin (James 1:13), nor can he be held responsible for my sin. If I am still a sinner after I become a Christian, it is no one's fault but my own. ([Reformed Expository Commentary – Galatians](#))

**UBS Handbook** "The whole verse may be understood in the following way: Paul is saying that to be put right with God by faith, Jewish Christians have to abandon the Law. By abandoning the Law, they have become **sinners**, that is, outside the Law. Can it therefore be deduced from this that they have made Christ a minister of sin? To this, Paul answers: By no means. The expression is emphatic."

**HCSB Study Bible** - Paul's opponents in Syrian Antioch and Galatia were apparently depicting his message of being **justified** by faith in Jesus **Christ** alone as "lowering" Jews spiritually to the level of being "Gentile sinners," which somehow would make **Christ... a promoter of sin** (i.e., by making Jews common "sinners"). Paul's response to this preposterous idea was the strongest possible negation—**absolutely not** (Gk *mā genoito*)."

**Reformation Study Bible** - The Galatian agitators and the "men ... from James" (v. 12) considered Paul a "sinner" (like the Gentiles of Gal 2:15) for breaking the Jewish dietary food laws. They had probably also accused Paul's gospel of promoting sin (Rom. 3:8).

**Grant Richison** - **But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ-** Paul's antagonists contended that justification by faith eradicates the moral law. If grace does away with law, then people can live as they please. They argued that eliminating the law would mean that a person could do as he or she pleases. Peter and his crowd argued by implication that a person has to work for justification. The cross of Christ is not enough for salvation. **we ourselves also are found sinners**, It was an admission on the part of Jewish Christians that justification by works proves that they are sinners. Their failure in keeping the law forces them to admit their sinful condition. They did not find righteousness in keeping the law. **is Christ therefore a minister of sin?** If God declares a person right in His eyes by faith, does this make Christians lawless? Legalists argued in this way, "If Christ does away with the law for salvation and sanctification then that would make Christ lawless." Christ would endorse sin. This conclusion is false because Christ dealt with the sin issue on the cross. To believe that God justifies and sanctifies a person by faith does not imply lawlessness. Liberty is not liberty from God's righteous standards. Neither is it lawlessness to fellowship with Gentiles. Going back to the law as a system of salvation and sanctification abandons the grace principle. We imply what Christ did on the cross was not sufficient. If Peter is right in going back to the Mosaic Law, then he was wrong in eating with the Gentiles. If he is right in eating with the Gentiles, then he was wrong in going back to the Mosaic Law. If he is right in one place, he is wrong in the other. He cannot hold the two at the same time. They are mutually exclusive. If he starts out by grace, then goes back to the law, he then abandons grace. He would say in effect that what Christ did on the cross was not enough. Peter's return to legalism was an attack on grace. **Certainly not!** The conclusion that Christ is the minister of sin is the right inference if Peter's reversion to legalism is right. The thought that Christ is the minister of sin is a revolting thought to Paul. The law cannot add anything to the death of Christ for our sins. If we carefully investigate justification in Christ and find ourselves to still be sinners, that doesn't make Christ the minister of sin. This is an abhorrent thought. Paul adamantly denied the accusation that Christ promotes sin by offering the principle of grace. **PRINCIPLE:** The principle of grace does not endorse licentiousness. ([Galatians 2:17](#))

**Thomas Constable** - Paul refuted the charge of the Judaizers that justification by faith led to lawless behavior. He said this made Christ, in effect, a promoter of sin. This could never be. If a Christian puts himself or herself back under the Law, the Law will show him or her to be a sinner since no one can keep the Law perfectly. These verses are a strong testimony that Christians

are free from the requirements of the Mosaic Law. What did Paul mean when he said that "while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners" (v. 17)? "Here he [Paul] may simply mean that when law-abiding Jews like Peter and himself cease to look to the law as the basis of their justification before God and find that justification in Christ instead, they put themselves effectively on a level with 'sinners of the gentiles': they have, in that sense, 'been found sinners'-they themselves (kai autoi) as much as lesser breeds without the law. But this applies to all Jewish Christians, even to those who have not appreciated the law-free character of the gospel: by yielding faith to Christ they have in logic, if not in consciousness, abandoned faith in the law, and have had to take their place as sinners, utterly in need of God's justifying grace." (Quoting F F Bruce [The Epistle to the Galatians](#)) "Paul is arguing that although it is true that in order to be justified in Christ it is necessary to abandon faith in the law as a means of salvation (premise 1) and hence to become sinners in the sense of being reduced to the level of the 'Gentiles and sinners' of v. 15 (premise 2), the conclusion does not follow that Christ thereby becomes an agent of sin (in the sense of a promoter of actual wrongdoing), support for this statement being given in vv. 18-20." (Quoting Ronald Fung [The Epistle to the Galatians](#)) ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Douglas Moo** - Paul asks if Christ, in, as it were, requiring Jewish Christians to abandon their allegiance to torah as the authoritative revelation of their conduct, is "serving" or "leading others to commit" sin. Paul rejects this implication with his typically strong negative, μὴ γένοίτο—"absolutely not!" (KJV: "God forbid"). (This is the conclusion of a long preceding explanation). ([Galatians - Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT](#))

**Herman Ridderbos** - The immediately preceding verses were easy to understand as issuing from the situation described in verse 14. Now, however, there follows an objection, perhaps not so much derived from the occasional event at Antioch (it would, e.g., be difficult to put the objection in Peter's mouth), but an objection which inevitably shines through every preaching of the justification by faith (cf. Rom. 6:1, 15), and one which is apparently raised here in special relevancy to the readers of this letter. The objection has reference to the seeming ethical danger of the doctrine. Does it not make for godless and normless living? The objection begins by saying something that cannot be denied: if even we (Jews) ourselves, quite as much as the Gentiles, are found to be sinners,<sup>23</sup> and there is, therefore, no essential difference between those who observe the law and the sinners of the Gentiles ... And thence the question which, on the basis of that clause, can be asked, and is as a matter of fact always being asked anew: Is this Christ, then, a minister of sin, serving in its cause? The answer could not be more definitely negative.<sup>25</sup> Paul nowhere does injustice to the gravity of sin or to the holiness of the law. Both are always totally assumed. ([NICNT - Galatians - 1953](#))

**Alan Cole** - But if, at the very moment when we are desiring to be justified through Christ, we prove to be sinners ourselves, does that mean that Christ is only causing us to sin? Perish the very thought. The passage 2:17-19 is again not easy to interpret. Here the problem is not disjointed thought and language, but rather some ambiguities in the first sentence. The question centres on the exact meaning of *heurethēmen hamartōloi*, found to be sinners, translated above as 'prove to be sinners' (NIV has 'it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners'). In view of the later development of the argument, NEB mg. is probably right with 'we no less than the Gentiles have accepted the position of sinners'. In either case, *hamartōloi*, sinners, is to be understood with reference to our position in the eyes of God rather than our direct moral condition, although it is the same word used above for 'Gentile sinners', and this can hardly be an accident, since a different word is used below. Those who have thought that the word referred to actual sin see here a direct reference to the charge made by the Judaizers that Paul preached 'antinomianism'. To the Jew, Paul's gospel of salvation by free grace through faith in Christ would remove all incentive for moral effort and all desire to avoid sin. In their eyes, such a doctrine would lead to a lower moral standard than under the law of Moses. Therefore, even Christ would have only become *hamartias diakonos*, an agent of sin, or 'an abettor of sin' (NEB), one who 'promotes sin' (NIV). Paul rightly recoils from such a blasphemy with horror. As often, his first reaction to this sort of charge is not theological argument, but a strong statement that this is utterly inconsistent with the revealed nature of God. There is no need for him to show in detail at this stage how utterly false such a charge would be. In the third and last section of the letter ('The argument from results', 5:2-6:18), Paul will develop this thought further. If the first sentence had been standing by itself, unquestionably the above would have been the simplest interpretation. But in view of what follows, it may be better to understand it something like the following: 'If, at the very moment when we say that we ourselves are justified by faith alone, we turn out to be preaching to others that "faith alone" is inadequate, but that they must keep the law as well, does that not mean that trusting in Christ is only leading them into sin? for it is teaching them not to trust the law.' The exact meaning of *dikaionumai*, translated conventionally 'be justified', need not be discussed in detail, since the dispute here is not over what 'justification' is, but how it is to be obtained. In general terms, it means to be put in right relation with God. BAGD therefore translates the verb as, 'to be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous, and thereby become *dikaios* (righteous), receive the divine gift of *dikaiosisynē* (righteousness)'. This reflects the modern swing from a purely forensic understanding of the verb (which could, at extremes, resemble a legal fiction) to the understanding that it is fundamentally a 'salvation-word', closely connected with the biblical concept of grace. Without in any way obliterating the biblical distinction between justification and sanctification, it is important to realize that being 'put right' with God involves and issues in a subsequent total change in our moral behaviour, though this in itself could never commend us to God. ([Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Galatians](#))

**Homer Kent** - It is best, therefore, to regard Paul as using the word "sinners" (*hamartōloi*) in a sense that has been colored by the Jewish expression "sinners of the Gentiles" (ex *ethnōn hamartōloi*) in Gal 2:15. His question means this: If Jews who believe in Christ for their justification then proceed to forsake their traditional adherence to all the rules of the Mosaic Law and begin living apart from it as did the Gentiles (and Jewish Christians in Antioch, including Peter, had been doing this), was this actually a sin against God, and one which Christ had prompted them to commit? To Paul such a thought was monstrous, and he proceeds to show that it was the reverting to law which involved transgression, not the opposite. ([The Freedom of God's Sons - Galatians, 1981](#))

**Phil Newton** - [see below](#).

The **UBS Handbook on Galatians** adds that "Try is literally "seek," and it should be rendered in such a way that it does not mean simply attempting or striving without any assurance of success, but rather desiring fervently or hoping (RSV "endeavor," Knox "putting our hopes of justification in Christ").

**Seeking** (trying) ([2212](#)) ([zeteo](#)) means giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after something. In classical Greek *zeteo* was often used as a technical term for philosophical investigation, something "examined, considered" or "deliberated." The [present tense](#) speaks of continuous action. " The **seeking** does not suggest that we are unsure of the success, but points rather to the desire and the hope of the believers." (Ridderbos)

**Sinners** ([268](#)) see preceding note on [hamartolos](#)

**Justified** ([1344](#)) see preceding note on [dikaioo](#)

**John Stott** on the phrase **justified in Christ** - That is, our justification takes place when we are united to Christ by faith. And someone who is united to Christ is never the same person again. Instead, he is changed. It is not just his standing before God which has changed; it is he himself—radically, permanently changed. To talk of his going back to the old life, and even sinning as he pleases, is frankly impossible. He has become a new creation and begun a new life. This amazing change, which comes over somebody who is justified in Christ, Paul now unfolds. He describes it in terms of a death and a resurrection. Twice in Gal 2:19 and Gal 2:20 he speaks of this dying and this rising to life again. Both take place through union with Christ. It is Christ's death and resurrection in which we share. ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**In Christ** - Wuest feels " it is better to use it with the locative of sphere and translated in Christ, since Christ is the sphere within which his justification was procured and applied, Christ being his righteousness. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

#### Related Resource:

- See study on meaning and significance of [locative of sphere](#)

### MAY IT NEVER BE!

**Is Christ then a minister of sin** - Paul repudiates the false assumption of the Judaizers who charged that Christ is the promoter and encourager of sin in that He causes the Jew to abandon the law as a justifying agency, and in doing so, puts himself on the common plane of a Gentile whom he calls a sinner and a dog. The Judaizers argued that in view of the fact that violation of the law is sin, therefore, abandonment of the law in an effort to be justified in Christ is also Sin. Thus Christ is the Promoter of sin. (Wuest)

**Minister** (servant , deacon) ([1249](#))([diakonos](#)) is from the word group ([diakonos](#), [diakoneo](#), [diakonia](#)) which focuses on the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature, and including such mundane activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs, activities that to many would seem to be without dignity (not true of course in God's eyes, Pr 15:3, Rev 22:12+). In summary, the basic idea of this word group is that of humble, submissive, personal service, with less emphasis on a specific office or a particular function. As Matthew Henry once said "Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed."

**May it never be!** (*mē genoito*) - God forbid. Literally it means "may it never come into existence" or "may it not be thought of."

**Spurgeon on may it never be** - Justification by faith does not make us think lightly of sin. On the contrary, it creates in us such love to God that we loathe the very idea of offending Him. For the tendency of the gospel of grace is to excite gratitude in those who receive it. If I am freely pardoned, then I must love him who has thus generously forgiven me. Gratitude is the root of true virtue and the mainspring of all holiness. If there are base-minded men who can suck poison out of this honeycomb, is Christ to be blamed for their evil-doing? God forbid! But if, on the other hand, you and I go back to trusting in works, then we are indeed guilty in the sight of God.

**Leon Morris** states, "It is Paul's most emphatic repudiation of any idea to which it refers"<sup>1</sup> and is often used by Paul to refute any possible false implication that might be drawn from his teaching." It is a concept which is so repulsive to Paul that it causes him to exclaim, "may it never be."

The exclamation "me genoito" is a aorist, middle, optative. The optative is the mood of wish or desire. It is Paul's wish that this not be their attitude or thinking. Middle voice speaks of personal benefit for them not to think this.

**Me genoito** - With one exception, this is primarily a Pauline phrase - 15x in 15v - Lk. 20:16; Ro 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Co. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14

---

**Phil Newton** continues his [exposition from Gal 2:16](#)..

Grace is confusing to the natural mind. It is so contrary to our human impulses and self-made security. By grace we mean the work of God on the sinner's behalf, not due to anything merited by the sinner, but purely out of the love, mercy, and sovereign purpose of God. Here we speak of the specific grace of God in saving sinners by the merits of Jesus Christ. The sinner has nothing to offer God in exchange for righteousness. He is completely helpless to improve his standing with God, so God Himself intervenes on the sinner's behalf. He satisfies the demands of His righteousness through His Son and accepts the death of Christ in the place of the sinner being judged. The sinner receives the 'alien righteousness' of Jesus Christ by faith, a faith which is also a gift of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Paul explains that justification is applied to the sinner by his entering into a union with Jesus Christ by faith, for he speaks of "seeking to be justified in Christ," with the emphasis on "in Christ." This phrase is common in Paul's epistles. He means by being "in Christ," that the believer is now joined to Christ, he is in relationship to Christ by faith, so that all of the merits of Jesus Christ have become the believer's. In this context, being "in Christ" is juxtaposed against being "in the Law." It is in the sphere of relationship to Jesus Christ that sinners are declared righteous before God, never in the sphere of relationship to the Law. The Law cannot justify nor make alive; it can only condemn lawbreakers. In contrast, Jesus Christ can justify because of the sufficiency of His own righteousness in fulfilling the Law and through the propitiation (divine satisfaction) in His death.

Let us keep in mind Paul's emphasis on being "justified in Christ," for here he is also addressing the major problem we find in the Galatian epistle. We recall that Paul illustrates the problem of what was happening in Galatia through a situation that arose in Antioch (in the Galatian region) with Peter. Peter had trusted in Christ alone for his justification, but when certain Jews who came from Jerusalem arrived in Antioch, Peter's previous fellowship with Gentiles was broken off. The Jewish-Christian visitors sneered at the very idea of "breaking the law" by a Jew having any fellowship with a Gentile. So Peter withdrew, and in doing so, confused the truth of the gospel in Antioch (Gal 2:14). Those who had been watching him were suddenly confused in thinking that the merits of Jesus Christ alone were not enough for their justification. Now they got the impression, especially with the overbearing message of the Judaizers, that in order for a Gentile to be justified he had to totally conform to the Jewish ceremonial law. They were left thinking, 'Christ is not enough'.

Here was the question of the Judaizers which they posed to the Gentile Christians in Galatia: *'How can you be justified if you are not keeping the ceremonial law? The law says that God's people are not to have fellowship with the uncircumcised, so how can you claim to be justified if you are still a sinner and lawbreaker?'*

Their idea of being a "sinner" was not breaking the moral laws prohibiting murder, adultery, and stealing, which we find in the Ten Commandments. In this particular context, they had in mind the ceremonial laws of Judaism. They wanted to require that Gentiles maintain the various laws that were distinctively Jewish in order to be justified. So they were insisting that if you are justified only through faith in Christ, then Christ has become a minister of sin for all of those who do not keep the ceremonial laws.

This is where Paul's ire rises! *"But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!"*

The **"we ourselves...also"** points to fellow Jewish Christians. Paul had been a stickler for keeping the ceremonial law as a means of justification. But no longer! He had entered into union with Jesus Christ by faith, so that all of the work of Christ was applied to his life and he was justified before God. But he no longer continued to keep the ceremonial law as a means to justification. He was considered a "sinner" by the Jews. Now they were accusing Christ of being a **"minister of sin."** Paul uttered his strongest prohibition: **"May it never be!"** This was his typical way of repudiating a wrong inference from a right premise. Yes, we are justified in Christ; that is the correct premise. The wrong inference is now corrected: No, Christ does not become a minister of sin by no longer requiring adherence to the ceremonial law, for no one was ever justified by adherence to the law in the first place! He points out that they have failed to understand that **"since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified"** Therefore, these Judaizers are speaking about that which they do not understand.

Perhaps someone among us has fallen into this same trap. You find the message of faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone to be repulsive! You resist the whole idea that you can do nothing to contribute to your salvation. You may not be thinking of circumcision or participation in various ceremonial rituals, but you nonetheless are adding some religious activity as a necessity for salvation. Maybe it is your baptism or your church activity or some act of service which you think must be added to the work of Christ. You are thinking, 'all of this teaching of Christ alone is just wrong; I must do my part too if I am to be justified'. With Paul we declare, "May it never be!" For the real sin is resting in the law for your salvation, for that puts the glory of justification in your own ability, rather than upon the grace of God.

The real transgression is adhering to the Law for justification. This is what Paul has in mind in Gal 2:18 when he wrote, "For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor." ([Galatians 2:17-19 Justified by Faith 4](#))

#### Galatians 2:18 "For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor."

Greek: ei gar ha katelysa (I had torn down - V-AIA-1S) tauta palin oikodomō (V-PIA-1S) parabatēn emauton synistanō (I prove - V-PIA-1S)

Amplified: For if I [or any others who have taught that the observance of the Law of Moses is not essential to being justified by God should now by word or practice teach or intimate that it is essential to] build up again what I tore down, I prove myself a transgressor.

Phillips But if I attempt to build again the whole structure of justification by the Law then I do, in earnest, make myself a sinner.

Wuest For if the things I tear down, these again I build up, I exhibit myself as a transgressor. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

NET Galatians 2:18 But if I build up again those things I once destroyed, I demonstrate that I am one who breaks God's law.

GNT Galatians 2:18 ε γ ρ κατ λυσα τα τα π λιν ο κοδομ , παροβ την μουτ ν συνιστ ω.

NLT Galatians 2:18 Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down.

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

ESV Galatians 2:18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

ASV Galatians 2:18 For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor.

CSB Galatians 2:18 If I rebuild the system I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker.

NIV Galatians 2:18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.

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

NRS Galatians 2:18 But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor.

YLT Galatians 2:18 for if the things I threw down, these again I build up, a transgressor I set myself forth;

NAB Galatians 2:18 But if I am building up again those things that I tore down, then I show myself to be a transgressor.

NJB Galatians 2:18 If I now rebuild everything I once demolished, I prove that I was wrong before.

GWN Galatians 2:18 If I rebuild something that I've torn down, I admit that I was wrong to tear it down.

BBE Galatians 2:18 For if I put up again those things which I gave to destruction, I am seen to be a wrongdoer.

YLT for if the things I threw down, these again I build up, a transgressor I set myself forth;

- Ga 2:4,5,12-16,21 4:9-12 5:11 Ro 14:15 1Co 8:11,12
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For (gar)** is a **term of explanation** which should always prompt the question "What is being explained?" In context Paul has just declared "May it never be!" and now proceeds to give the reason one should do "away with such a thought." Paul is explaining why it is absolutely absurd to consider Christ is a minister of sin (Gal 2:17)! Vine considers the other possibility that **for** is "introducing a succinct statement of the conclusive reason why the law must be definitely abandoned as a means of justification."

**If I rebuild what I have once destroyed** - The **Amplified** version helps understand what Paul means stating that those *"who have taught that the observance of the Law of Moses is not essential to being justified by God should now by word or practice teach or intimate that it (observance of the Law) is essential to"* being justified, that is the real transgression. **Phillips** paraphrases it this way - "But if I attempt to build again the whole structure of justification by the Law then I do, in earnest, make myself a sinner." Notice the **we** of v17 is changed to the **I** in v18. **Boice** says "This personal form of expression continues as Paul begins to unfold the full nature of the justification that is his because of his being "in Christ."

And if Paul did that, he, not Christ, would be the transgressor! By preaching the Gospel of grace and salvation by faith alone in Christ alone Paul had in effect **destroyed** (set aside, pulled down, broken up) the false Jewish notion that "justification" was attainable by keeping the law. Now for Paul to go back to that false teaching (like Peter's actions at least suggested to those who were present) would be for him to transgress or deviate from the clear truth of the Gospel.

**MacArthur** - In other words, if anyone, including myself (**Ed**: Paul), tries to rebuild a system of legalism after he has once destroyed it by believing and preaching the gospel of God's powerful grace and man's sinful helplessness, he proves himself, not Christ, to be a transgressor. He proves himself to be a hypocrite and a sinner by abandoning grace for law. ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Galatians](#))

Peter had actually been the one who had originally torn down the distinctions between Jewish kosher and Gentile eating practices (Acts 10:1-48). Unfortunately he and Barnabas and the other Christian Jews at

Antioch were reconstructing the old fences.

**Marvin Vincent** interprets this passage as referring to Peter (even though Paul is clearly writing in the first person -- the point is still the same for if Paul were to do what Peter did, he too would be a transgressor. **MacArthur** referring to Paul putting himself in Peter's shoes quips "*There's a little bit of gentleness in this, he softens the blow by pulling himself into it*" - Peter, by his Christian profession, had asserted that justification was by faith alone; and by his eating with Gentiles had declared that the Mosaic law was no longer binding upon him. He had thus, figuratively, destroyed or pulled down the Jewish law as a standard of Christian faith and conduct. By his subsequent refusal to eat with Gentiles he had retracted this declaration, had asserted that the Jewish law was still binding upon Christians, and had thus built again what he had pulled down.

**Spurgeon** on how one might **rebuild** - If I once said I would not trust in my good works, and now go back to trust in them, I have already—whatever may be my outward conduct—perpetrated a great sin. **Ed comment** - And how often do many of us forget that not only did we enter by grace through faith into this great salvation but thereafter until the day we pass to glory we are to continue by grace through faith? We know it took miraculous divine intervention and power to save us the first time, but we think that now we're safe in the Ark, we can live this Christ life on our own, in our own natural strength, without need of the daily grace and power of God's Spirit. Indeed, this is the [bane](#) of modern day Christianity just as it was in the first century prompting Paul to ask in the next chapter in Galatians 3:2-3- "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?")

**Phil Newton** comments on Gal 2:18:

To paraphrase it, Paul was writing, *'I lived with that mindset for many years. I thought that all of my slavish adherence to the Law was going to justify me before God. But then, in a flash(Ed: e.g., Acts 9:3-4ff), I saw that all of this was to no avail, that none of my works of righteousness would add to my standing with God. So the whole system that I tenaciously clung to, I tore down the moment I came to rest my faith in Jesus Christ and His sufficiency. The biggest mistake I could make, yes, the biggest transgression, would be for me to go right back to the very thing that I tore down when I entered into union with Jesus Christ. You are calling Christ 'a minister of sin' because faith in Him demands that you no longer trust the Law for your justification. No, you who are trying to go back to that same dead pattern of legalism are the real lawbreakers. That is because adherence to the Law never saved the first person. Why would you return to trust in something that cannot save?'*

The most miserable person in the world is that one who has understood the grace of God in Christ, embraced Jesus Christ by faith, then along the course has begun to question if Jesus Christ is really sufficient for his justification before God. He inches back toward 'doing, doing, doing' as a means of satisfying the demands of God. He becomes a legalist inwardly and often, outwardly, by his persistence on following certain principles and practices to gain a little more merit with God. Paul's whole message to the Galatians is that Jesus Christ is sufficient for your justification and He is sufficient alone, without any addition on your part.

Let me stop to point out something of great importance along this vein. When we teach that a person is not saved by the works of the Law and that you cannot add anything to the sufficiency of Christ, the immediate reaction by some is that we are giving way to [antinomianism](#). That is, if we cannot add to our justification by our own obedience to the Law, if salvation is only by grace, then that means I can forget obedience and do whatever I want to do. I have no responsibility or capability to save myself, so I need not give any thought to obedience. Quite frankly, many Baptists have fallen into this trap, especially with the emphasis on "once saved, always saved." How often I have heard someone who is living in great disobedience to God and with indifference to the commands of God, say, 'I was saved when I was 8 years old, so it really doesn't matter what I do, because once saved, always saved'. This becomes the excuse and even a license to sin against God without any fear or godly concern. ([Galatians 2:17-19 Justified by Faith 4](#))

**Grant Osborne** - By "**rebuilding**" the law here Paul means reinstating it as the mandatory requirement for being Christian, as the Judaizers have done. If Paul were to allow Peter and the other Jewish Christians to renege on the gospel of Christ, and thereby on the centrality of faith and the cross, then he would join the Judaizers as true "lawbreakers" or "transgressors." While the issue in this passage may seem to have more historical than contemporary significance, the implications are just as important for our day. It is the gospel that is at stake. There is a continuing tendency in all religions to develop a salvation system based on works-righteousness: the belief that if we are only good enough and can follow the demands of our religious system well enough, we can achieve our own salvation. This is inherent in every non-Christian religion and, sadly, is followed by too many Christians as well. The basic error is that the whole process centers on the "I," on the hope that I can through my own efforts somehow earn my salvation. The heart of sin is the worship of self, and "I"—egotistical as I am—do not want to depend for my salvation on God and what he has done. Paul will respond to this tendency in the following two verses. ([Galatians Verse by Verse](#))

**Rebuild** ([3618](#)) [\(oikodomeo](#) from [oikos](#) = dwelling + [dome](#) = building [of a house] from [deme](#) = to build - see word study on derivative verb [sunokodomeo](#)) means literally to build, construct or erect a dwelling. In this context "in connection with the law ([oikodomeo](#))" means "to render or declare valid." (Wuest) In short, Paul refers to "rebuilding" the Mosaic Laws (and keeping of them) as the way one could be justified, something he clearly stated in Gal 2:16 is impossible!

**What I once destroyed** - What had Paul "destroyed" razed to the ground (figuratively speaking)? He had "destroyed" the system of works based salvation, the system that as a Pharisee of Pharisees had clung to as the means of achieving personal righteousness. That false system was torn down by the Gospel of the grace of God which he now preached.

**Destroyed** (abolish, tear down) ([2647](#)) [\(kataluo](#) from [kata](#) = down, prefix intensifying verb [luo](#) = loosen, dissolve, demolish, untie, undo) means literally to loosen down (unloose) and then to utterly destroy or to overthrow completely. Jesus used this very verb in Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I came to **abolish** ([kataluo](#)) the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."

**Wuest** explains that "When [kataluo](#) is applied to the law as in this context it "means "to deprive of force, to abrogate.**Paul** is really referring to **Peter's** action of declaring the Levitical legislation regarding the eating of food, null and void by his eating with the Gentiles, and then declaring it valid by his act of withdrawing from that fellowship. But he tactfully puts himself into the picture and supposes an hypothetical case. His argument is to the effect that instead of committing sin by abandoning the law for grace, one becomes a transgressor by returning to the law which he has abandoned." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

**Richison** writes that "Paul completely destroyed the law as a system of salvation and sanctification. Paul was in the business of destroying false doctrine. He will show in chapters 3 and 4 that the law never did save or sanctify. Biblical consistency is a core value of Christianity."

**Spurgeon** - If I once said I would not trust in my good works, and now go back to trust in them, I have already, whatever may be my outward conduct, perpetrated a great sin.

**Lovett** - The man who tears down a bridge and then rebuilds it, admits he made an awful mistake in tearing it down in the first place. Again, returning to legal bondage after receiving the grace of Christ, is like a man who has been pardoned, returning to prison to serve out the balance of a life sentence. Such an act is stupid for it cancels the effect of the pardon. The very turning back to Law indicates there is no salvation in Christ. Imagine the effect of these words, though addressed to Peter, on the Galatians who were in danger of doing this very thing! ([Lovett's Lights on Galatians](#))

**I prove myself to be a transgressor** - Paul says he would be the one that "crossed over the line" if he reverted to the law and as explained he is actually alluding to Peter's transgression! If he returned to the Law after trusting Christ alone for salvation, the Law would only demonstrate that he was a transgressor! To put one's relationship with God on a legalistic basis is to make oneself a transgressor (lawbreaker).

**Prove** (demonstrate) ([4921](#)) [\(sunistemi/sunistao](#) from [sun](#) = together with + [histemi](#) = set, place, stand) means literally to set, place or put together. In this context the idea is to make known and conspicuous by exhibiting in one's conduct.

**Don Anderson** - Peter was trying to erect the wall between the Jews and the Gentiles once again. By his actions in so doing he is showing himself a transgressor. Living as a Gentile, you tore down the law; and living like a Jew, you are tearing down the grace of God. Peter is CAUGHT ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA. On a chessboard, he has been put in CHECKMATE. Christians, many times, are brought to a point of real blessing when they recognize some of the truth about allowing Jesus Christ to live out His life in them and the utter futility of trying in themselves to live a life pleasing to God. ([Notes](#))

**Transgressor** ([3848](#)) [\(parabates](#) from from [pará](#) = beyond or contrary to + [baino](#) = to go; see study on cognate noun - [parabasis](#)) describes one who steps on one side and thus goes beyond or steps across a line. A transgressor is a violator of the law, one who goes beyond the law. It refers to the person who steps beyond a fixed limit into forbidden territory. The point is that the law draws the line that should not be crossed or "stepped over". Where there is no law, people do not deliberately disobey God but they disobey in ignorance.

**Wuest** - The word **transgressor** is from [parabates](#). This word seems to have been chosen by the inspired apostle rather than the term used so far in the discussion, namely **sinner**, from [hamartolos](#), to get rid of the ambiguity of the latter word as it was used in this context. **Parabates** refers to one who disregards the ethical spirit of the law, **hamartolos**, to one who disregards the letter of the law. The use of the former word rather than of the latter, **emphasizes the point here that one who is obedient to the statutes of the law yet may miss the real meaning of the law** Peter, by withdrawing from fellowship with the Gentiles, was obeying the **letter** of a law he knew had been set aside by God, and was ignoring its significance, namely that of a temporary measure for the time of the Old Testament dispensation, to be abrogated at the Cross. Peter became a **transgressor** in that he, declaring by his conduct that the law was null and void, now declares valid again that which he destroyed, thus admitting his guilt in that destruction. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

**John Stott** explains "He specially denies the added allegation that he was guilty of making Christ the agent or author of men's sins. On the contrary, he goes on, 'I make myself a transgressor' (Gal 3:18). In other words, "if after my justification I am still a sinner, it is my fault and not Christ's. I have only myself to blame; no-one can blame Christ." ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Galatians 2:19 "For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.**

Greek: egō gar dia nomou nomō (to [the] law) apethanon (V-AIA-1S) hina Theō zēsō (V-ASA-1S)

Amplified: For I through the Law [under the operation of the curse of the Law] have [in Christ's death for me] myself died to the Law and all the Law's demands upon me, so that I may [henceforth] live to and for God.

Phillips For under the Law I "died", and now I am dead to the Law's demands so that I may live for God.



Wuest For, as for myself, I through the intermediate agency of the law died to the law, in order that I might live with respect to God.[Erdmans Publishing - used by permission](#)

NET Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I may live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GNT Galatians 2:19 γ γ ρ δι ν μου ν μ π θονον, να θε ζ σω. Χριστ ουνεστα ρωμου·

NLT Galatians 2:19 For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law-- I stopped trying to meet all its requirements-- so that I might live for God.

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

ESV Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

ASV Galatians 2:19 For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

CSB Galatians 2:19 For through the law I have died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ

NIV Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

NKJ Galatians 2:19 "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NRS Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ;

YLT Galatians 2:19 for I through law, did die, that to God I may live; 20 with Christ I have been crucified, and live no more do I, and Christ doth live in me; and that which I now live in the flesh - in the faith I live of the Son of God, who did love me and did give himself for me;

NAB Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ;

NJB Galatians 2:19 In fact, through the Law I am dead to the Law so that I can be alive to God. I have been crucified with Christ

GWN Galatians 2:19 When I tried to obey the law's standards, those laws killed me. As a result, I live in a relationship with God. I have been crucified with Christ.

BBE Galatians 2:19 For I, through the law, have become dead to the law, so that I might be living to God. 20 I have been put to death on the cross with Christ;

- **For through the Law** : Ga 3:10,24 Ro 3:19,20 4:15 5:20 7:7-11,14,22,23 8:2 10:4,5
- **I died to the Law**: Ro 6:2,11,14 7:4,6,9 Col 2:20 3:3 1Pe 2:24
- **so that I might live to God**: Ga 2:20 Ro 14:7,8 1Co 10:31 2Co 5:15 1Th 5:10 Tit 2:14 Heb 9:14 1Pe 4:1,2,6
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE "I" PROBLEM SOLVED DEAD TO THE LAW

**Grant Osborne** writes that "Paul now solves the classic problem of the "I" and the desire to control my own salvation, either by keeping the law (for these Jewish Christians) or by being a morally upright person (for most of us)." ([Galatians Verse by Verse](#))

**For (gar) (term of explanation)** - "Introducing a succinct statement of the conclusive reason why the law must be definitely abandoned as a means of justification." (Vine)

**For through the Law I died to the Law - Amplified** = "I through the Law [under the operation of the curse of the Law] have [in Christ's death for me] myself died to the Law and all the Law's demands upon me." Notice that Paul does not say the Law is dead, but that he was now dead to the Law (in Christ). Paul's point is that he knew that the Law did not liberate him, but in fact condemned him. Christ threw out the "life preserver" so to speak to a dying man, by dying for that man! The Law demanded death for sin and gave no hope of ever attaining perfect righteousness, the only type of righteousness that our Holy God accepts! But praise God, what God demands, God provides in His Son (Jn 3:16, 2 Cor 5:21)! And now believers are no longer under (subject to, in bondage to) the Law. We have died to this old "master" Law.

NO MASTER CAN GIVE ORDERS TO A DEAD SLAVE.

In addition since Paul was dead to the law, then it was impossible for the law to be the way that he stood accepted by God.

**John Calvin** - To die to the law is to renounce it and to be freed from its dominion, so that we have no confidence in it and it does not hold us captive under the yoke of slavery.[Galatians 2 Commentary](#)

**De Haan** on the Law - He is speaking of God's holy, inviolable law, including the Commandments written upon the tables of stone, and says, as far as that law is concerned, I am dead. In the eyes of the law, I don't even exist any more. The law does not even recognize my existence. So little power, so little application has that law to me. Let me repeat, Paul does not say, "the law is dead." It is very, very much alive. It still curses, it still condemns the sinner, it still is the ministration of death. It still demands the death of the transgressor. But says Paul: as far as I am concerned the law cannot touch me any more. I am beyond its reach forever, for "I through the law am dead to the law." Now, what is true of Paul is true of every believer. In Romans 7:4+ we read: "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God." And again in Romans 6:14+ we read "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." ([Studies in Galatians](#))

**David Guzik** comments that "The problem with the certain men with James was that they were not thinking and living as if they were dead to the law. For them, they were still alive under the law and they believed keeping the law would make them accepted by God. Not only were they living under the law, but they also wanted the Gentiles to live under the law." ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Through my sight of the law, which I have seen to be so stern that all it can do is to condemn me for my shortcomings, I am driven away from it, and led to come and live in Christ Jesus, under the rule of grace, and not under the law of Moses. ([Galatians 2 Exposition](#))

**John MacArthur** on **died 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 (**Ed**: See [Martin Luther's comment below](#)). (Study Bible)

**Bartlett** has a similar interpretation as **MacArthur** writing that "To die to a thing is to cease to have any relation to it. Paul is saying that, by his acceptance of CHRIST, he has been freed from bondage to the law as a legalistic system and has entered true liberty ("**So that I might live to God**"). A man who moves across the border into another state is no longer under the law of the state in which he formerly made his residence. So the sinner who takes JESUS as his SAVIOUR passes from the condemnation of the law into the glorious liberty that is in CHRIST: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1, 2)." ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**John Stott** on **died to the law** - the law's demand of death was satisfied in the death of Christ ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Howard Vos** - If we are joined to Christ by faith in His finished work, we share in His fulfillment of the righteous demands of the law. The law has killed Him and us and we are therefore no longer subject to the law. Just as a woman whose husband dies is no longer bound to him but is free to marry another, so we being freed from the law by the interposition of death are freed to be joined to another. With this orientation, "I through the law am dead to the law" takes on profound significance. ([Everyman's Bible Commentary - Galatians: A Call to Christian Liberty](#))

**Osborne** adds that "As a Jewish follower of the law, Paul was faithful to its demands. Yet when Christ came the divine purpose of the law, as well as of Paul's obedience to it, was fulfilled. When the usefulness of the law ended, Paul in a sense died to it. Beyond making a personal, religious comment here, he is declaring a salvation-historical principle. In the new covenant era of Christ and the Spirit, Paul's old life is over. Likewise for us, when we die in Christ we die not only to the law but also to sin. We are united with Christ and thus freed from the law. Paul will explore this further in the next verse in his comment on being "crucified with Christ." ([Galatians Verse by Verse](#))

**John Calvin** - To die to the law is to renounce it and to be freed from its dominion, so that we have no confidence in it and it does not hold us captive under the yoke of slavery.[Galatians 2 Commentary](#)

**Phil Newton** sees a dual meaning in Paul's statement **I have died to the Law** -

What does the Law do? Does it save or even have the power to save? By the Law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20). As Paul wrote to the Romans, "I would not have come to know sin except through the Law" (Romans 7:7). The Law exposes the reality of our spiritual condition and enmity with God. We think that we are in fine condition before God, that is until the Law comes to us and exposes our hearts. "And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died" (Romans 7:9). The Law is wonderful for anyone who is able to keep all that it demands. But for lawbreakers or transgressors, like all of us, the Law condemns us. "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them" (Galatians 3:10). **So does the Law give life to us? Absolutely not! It kills us!** Actually, it is our sin that is the bigger problem rather than the Law, nevertheless, we would not know the problem of our sin if it was not for the Law. Once we come to understand our enmity with God and our condition as sinners, then we begin to seek refuge in Jesus Christ alone from divine condemnation. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, "**For through the Law I died to the Law.**" **It is really a two-fold statement.**

**On the one hand**, the Law condemned me as soon as my eyes were opened to understand its demands. "Through the Law I died to the Law," i.e., it condemned me and "I died" (Romans 7:9-11). It gave me no option for life. It had no power to change me or justify me. The Law was powerless to effect change in me because I had no power to obey its demands.

**On the other hand**, I died to the Law by being redeemed from the curse of the Law through the death of Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:13). By my union with Christ in His death, I died to the Law's demands and to its curse. The Law requires death for transgressors, so Jesus Christ died in my place before the demands of the Law. What the Law required, He fulfilled for me. Because I am in union with Christ through faith, then "I died to the Law; I have been crucified with Christ."

What a wonderful truth to dwell upon! This is why we are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1). All of the condemning and killing and cursing power of the Law toward us has been removed by the death of Christ. His death was fully applied to us, so that when we trust in Jesus Christ, we enter into union with Him in His death and resurrection. It was just as if you yourself died to the demands of the Law through the death of Christ. But that is only one part of the matter. That is the negative removed. But we are not justified so that we might live in limbo until Jesus returns. Paul explains by the next clause in verse nineteen.

**Died** (599) ([apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be away from this earthly realm). **Apothnesko** speaks of literal physical death (Ro 6:9+) but figuratively (metaphorically) of a believer's death to **sin** (Ro 6:2+, Ro 6:7+, Ro 6:8+, Col 3:3+), **self**, **Satan**, **the law** (Ro 7:6+) and **the world** (Col 2:20+, cp Gal 6:14+ - *crucified* used instead of *died*) which was effected when Christ was crucified and when by faith we believed in Him and in God's reckoning (albeit a "mysterious" teaching) were crucified with Him (Ro 6:6+).

**Wuest** has an excellent note on **the Law** - Paul's use of the word **law** in this verse must be governed by its use in the context. The words, "works of the law" of Gal 2:16, speak of the divine law conceived of as a means of acceptance with God in the case of the sinner who obeys it. Paul does not say that he is dead to law, that is, a law to himself, thus a lawless individual. He still holds to the great ethical principles of love and justice, for instance, which are eternal in their significance, the great underlying principles that inhere in God's character and in His government. When Paul says that he has died to a thing he means that he has ceased to have any relation to it, so that it has no further claim upon or control over him. It is law as conceived of as a body of legalistic statutes, that he has died to. He uses the personal pronoun *ego* ( *yo* ), which indicates that he is speaking of his own personal experience. His attempt to fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic legislation as a means of salvation, had taught him his own inability to meet its demands, and its inability to make him righteous. Thus he finally abandoned it as a means of justification, and accepted salvation in Christ. He found that what the law did was to reveal sin, to provoke sin, in a certain sense, to create sin, for where there was no law, sin was not reckoned. He found that it provided no remedy for sin, but rather condemned him hopelessly, for no one can fulfil its requirements. It exercised a double power over him, for it made him a sinner and punished him for being one. The poet says, "Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings." Faith in Christ was the means whereby Paul's; complete and irreparable break with the law was effected. The Lord Jesus lived under the law, fully obeyed that law, assumed the guilt and penalty which the human race incurred by having violated the law, and in dying under the law satisfied its requirements. Thus he passed out of the realm where law in its legalistic aspect had control over Him. All believers were identified with Christ in His death and also in His resurrection, and thus have passed out of the realm of divine law so far as its legalistic aspect is concerned. ([Galatians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#) )

### ALIVE TO GOD

Notice the **antimony** (a fundamental and apparently unresolvable conflict or contradiction) that death brings life! Only God could do that! Christ's life in us comes through death. Paul alludes to the transformation that occurs in believers.

**So that I might live to God - So that** ([hina](#)) expresses **purpose**. Paul is not referring to living like every human being alive on earth lives, but of living on a higher plane, understanding that this temporal life is the first phrase of our eternal life with God. God is life and to really live one needs to live to God and only those who are in Christ (Christ our life - Col 3:4+) by grace alone through faith alone can truly live and enjoy this short life as our Creator meant it to be enjoyed (cp Jn 10:10b).

**THOUGHT** - Too many people do not think their life has "purpose!" Well, here it is - live to God. Live to glorify and exalt God. If you do that you will have accomplished God's purpose for your life and you will reap the rewards in the life to come. Now that is amazing grace! Isaiah 43:7 says "Everyone who is called by My name, And **whom I have created for My glory**, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." Beloved, if you belong to Jesus, then you have been created for God's glory. Now enabled by the power of the indwelling Spirit obey your Lord's command to "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+) If you obey His command, you are guaranteed to hear his commend! Well done, My good and faithful servant!

**John Stott** summarizes it clearly - Justification is not a legal fiction, in which a man's status is changed while his character is left untouched...Our justification takes place when we are united to Christ by faith. And someone who is united to Christ is never the same person again. Instead, he is changed. It is not just his standing before God which has changed; it is he himself--radically, permanently changed. To talk of his going back to the old life [here, the life of legalism], and even sinning as he pleases [here, antinomianism], is frankly impossible. He has become a new creation and begun a new life ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Martin Luther** - Blessed is the person who knows how to use this truth (dead to law, alive to God) in times of distress. He can talk. He can say: 'Mr. Law, go ahead and accuse me as much as you like. I know I have committed many sins, and I continue to sin daily. But that does not bother me. You have got to shout louder, Mr. Law. I am deaf, you know. Talk as much as you like, I am dead to you. If you want to talk to me about my sins, go and talk to my flesh. Belabor that, but don't talk to my conscience. My conscience is a lady and a queen, and has nothing to do with the likes of you, because my conscience lives to Christ under another law, a new and better law, the law of grace.' ([Galatians 2 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - I do not know a better epitome of Christian experience than this (referring to Gal 2:19-20). This is the daily walk of a true child of God, if he liveth after any other sort, then he liveth not a Christian's life at all. Christ living in us, ourselves living upon Christ, and our union to Christ being visibly maintained by an act of simple faith in him, this is the true Christian's life.

**Bartlett** adds that "the apostle says that he is freed from the law, not that he may live in sin, but that he may live unto GOD. This is a most important point for those who hold firmly to the doctrine of justification by faith to keep ever in mind. The purpose of grace is not to give **freedom to sin** but to bring **freedom from sin**. Freed from sin, the believer is now free to live for GOD. What, then, is the purpose of the law? Anticipating in a word what will receive fuller treatment in our exposition of chapter 3, we may say that the objective of the law is to lead to CHRIST by showing man his utter need of a SAVIOUR. The law is an X-ray which reveals his sin to the sinner but does not remove the sin from the sinner. It condemns for sin but cannot redeem from sin. It shows the malady without affording a remedy. Again, we might think of the law as a road that leads up to the one and only bridge over a frightful chasm that must be crossed - and that bridge is CHRIST. In CHRIST we die positionally to the sin for which He died." ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**Wuest** - Subjection to the law as a means of acceptance with God, in reality prevented him from living a life of unreserved devotion to God. This is one of the most grievous vices of legalism, that it comes between the soul and God. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Might live** (2198) ([zao](#)) refers literally to natural physical life (1Cor 15:45), to come to life after death (Mt 9:18), to recover life after sickness (Jn 4:50). In this passage [zao](#) refers to supernatural, spiritual life (cf Jn 11:25, 26).

**Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- **crucified** (KJV): Ga 5:24 6:14 Ro 6:4-6 8:3,4 Col 2:11-14
- **nevertheless** (KJV): Ro 6:8,13 8:2 Eph 2:4,5 Col 2:13 3:3,4
- **but** (KJV): Joh 14:19,20 17:21 2Co 4:10,11 13:3,5 Eph 3:17 Col 1:27 1Th 5:10 1Pe 4:2 Rev 3:20
- **the life** (KJV): 2Co 4:11 10:3 1Pe 4:1,2
- **I now** (KJV): Ga 2:16 3:11 Joh 6:57 Ro 1:17 5:2 2Co 1:24 5:7,15 Php 4:13 1Th 5:10 1Pe 1:8 4:2
- **the Son** (KJV): Joh 1:49 3:16,35 6:69 9:35-38 Ac 8:37 9:20 1Th 1:10 1Jn 1:7 1Jn 4:9,10,14 5:10-13,20
- **who** (KJV): Ga 1:4 Mt 20:28 Joh 10:11 15:13 Ro 8:37 Eph 5:2,25 Tit 2:14 Rev 1:5
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Greek: Christo sunestauromai (1SRPI) zo (1SPAI) de ouketi ego, ze (3SPAI) de en emoi Christos; o de nunzo (1SPAI) en sarki, en pistei zo (1SPAI) te tou huiou tou theou tou agapesantos (AAPMSG) r

Amplified: I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Phillips As far as the Law is concerned I may consider that I died on the cross with Christ. And my present life is not that of the old "I", but the living Christ within me. The bodily life I now live, I live believing in the Son of God, who loved me and sacrificed himself for me

Wuest - With Christ I have been crucified, and it is no longer I who live, but there lives in me Christ. And that life which now I live in the sphere of the flesh, by faith I live it, which faith is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself on my behalf. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GNT ζ δ ο κ τ ι γ , ζ δ ν μ ο Χ ρ ι σ τ ο ς . δ ν ν ζ ν σ α ρ κ , ν π σ τ ε ι ζ τ ο υ ο τ ο θ ε ο τ ο γ α π τ ο υ σ τ ς μ ε κ α π α ρ α θ ν τ ο ς α υ τ ν π ρ μ ο .

NLT My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for

me.

KJV 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.

ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

ASV I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

CSB and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NIV I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

NKJ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NRS I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

YLT with Christ I have been crucified, and live no more do I, and Christ doth live in me; and that which I now live in the flesh -- in the faith I live of the Son of God, who did love me and did give himself for me;

NAB I have been crucified with Christ; 20 yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.

NJB I have been crucified with Christ 20 and yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me. The life that I am now living, subject to the limitation of human nature, I am living in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

GWN I have been crucified with Christ. 20 I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live I live by believing in God's Son, who loved me and took the punishment for my sins.

BBE I have been put to death on the cross with Christ; still I am living; no longer I, but Christ is living in me; and that life which I now am living in the flesh I am living by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who in love for me, gave himself up for me.

YLT with Christ I have been crucified, and live no more do I, and Christ doth live in me; and that which I now live in the flesh -- in the faith I live of the Son of God, who did love me and did give himself for me;

### PAUL'S "PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE" CHRIST LIVES IN ME BY HIS INDWELLING SPIRIT

**Technical note** - Both the NA(27)/UBS(4 )Greek text and the NRSV place the phrase "I have been crucified with Christ" at the end of Gal 2:19 but most English translations place these words at the beginning of Gal 2:20.

**NOTE:** [Click Galatians 2:20 Commentary for more than 45 pages of commentary notes on this famous passage.](#) Because this verse is discussed in such great detail on the separate page, the notes here are abridged.

**Donald Campbell** comments that "In Galatians 2:20 Paul enlarged on the meaning of verse 19. He "died to the Law" because he was crucified with Christ; he was able "to live for God" because Christ lived in him. Basic to an understanding of this verse is the meaning of union with Christ. This doctrine is based on such passages as Romans 6:1-6 and 1 Corinthians 12:13, which explain that believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into the church, the body of all true believers. Having been thus united to Christ, believers share in His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul could therefore write, I have been "crucified with Christ" (lit., "I have been and am now crucified with Christ"). This brought death to the Law. It also brought a change in regard to one's self: and I no longer live. The self-righteous, self-centered Saul died." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** says: How many personal pronouns of the first person are there in this verse? Are there not as many as eight? It swarms with I and me. The text deals not with the plural at all; it does not mention some one else, nor a third party far away, but the apostle treats of himself, his own inner life, his own spiritual death, the love of Christ to him, and the great sacrifice which Christ made for him.

**Bartlett** says: "I am crucified with Christ . . ." It is hardly necessary to say that Galatians 2:20 is one of the pre-eminently great texts of Scripture. (Memorize it.) Better, perhaps, than any single verse, it summarizes Paul's philosophy of life. And for untold numbers of believers it has been a polestar of faith, the very essence of what Christ means to them

**ILLUSTRATION** - Think of a pianist sitting down at a piano to play. Anyone hitting a key can make a sound. Some can hit the keys and produce only noise. But some can sit down to that piano and by touching the right chord, playing the right notes together in certain combinations, can make sweet sounds. Suppose a person sits down to a piano with his hands over the keys. Now picture a master pianist inside that person. The master can put his hands on the hands of that person, his fingers on those fingers so that by some means he can guide the fingers to the right keys at the right time, so that it would appear that the person sitting on the stool was playing the piano. This is how a Christian lives. Christ Jesus is in him, moving the Christian as to what to do and how to do it, when to say it and how to say it. A Christian person in the home acts the way he is inwardly led; the Christian woman in the community acts the way she is inwardly led; a Christian young person in school acts the way he or she is led. This is because the Christian is led from within by the Holy Spirit of God, who makes the things of Christ real to him. "Christ liveth in me." "Christ in you, the hope of glory." ([Plain talk on Galatians: Manford George Gutzke](#))

**Don Anderson** - Paul describes the life which he is now living as a Christian as a LIFE OF FAITH. The faith that saved him is the faith that he is exercising daily in the sufficiency of Christ for all of his needs. It is not by his FEELINGS but by his FAITH. This life which is now being lived in the flesh is being lived on the principle of faith.

**Howard Vos** says: Verse 20 is one of the most magnificent verses in all of Scripture. It makes abundantly clear the fact that Christianity is not a matter of some legalistic form—of carefully checking off a list of dos and don'ts. It is a life. Moreover, it is not human effort trying to bring off a superior kind of morality but divine life surging through the individual. "Old things are passed away . . . all things are become new" (2 Co 5:17). Verse 20 expands on the meaning of verse 19; Paul died to the law because he had been crucified with Christ; he lives to God because Christ lives in him. "I am crucified with Christ." The tense is perfect in the Greek with the resultant meaning: "I have been and remain crucified." This is how one dies to the law (v. 19) Romans 6:1-6 linked with 1 Corinthians 12:13 explains how one may be reckoned as crucified with Christ. By means of the Holy Spirit we are baptized into one body and into Christ. The Holy Spirit joins us to the church (the body of true believers) and to Him and causes us positionally to participate in His substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection. The old man or old nature with all its affections was crucified (Rom 6:6). Because I have been raised to newness of life, I live. But in a sense it is not I that live. It is not I in my own strength that achieves in this business of living the Christian life. Christ lives in me. How stupendous! A member of the divine Trinity living in me!

**The Saving Life of Christ by Ian Thomas** - Israel lived in self-imposed poverty for 40 years because they would not believe that the God who brought them out was the God who could bring them in. Forty years it took before God was able through Joshua to teach His people that to get in takes precisely the same kind of faith that it takes to get out. When once they stood by faith in the waters of the Jordan, the river parted even as the Red Sea.

**Richard Halverson** says: Christian growth is not the struggle to become the kind of person we think God wants us to be, but a surrender of our bodies, all our faculties, our right to ourselves, to God—that He may make us and mold us into the image of His Son, that through us His life and love and grace might flow.

**Tozer** - The problem is not to persuade God to fill us, but to want God sufficiently to permit Him to do so. The average Christian is so cold and so contented with his wretched condition that there is no vacuum of desire into which the blessed Spirit can rush in satisfying fullness.

**William MacDonald** - The believer is identified with Christ in His death. Not only was He crucified on Calvary, I was crucified there as well—in Him. This means the end of me as a sinner in God's sight. It means the end of me as a person seeking to merit or earn salvation by my own efforts. It means the end of me as a child of Adam, as a man under the condemnation of the law, as my old, unregenerate self. The old, evil "I" has been crucified; it has no more claims on my daily life. This is true as to my standing before God; it should be true as to my behavior.

**Stephen Olford** has written an entire book on Galatians 2:20 and introduces the first chapter with this note - I am often asked to sign my name in Bibles or books as I travel and minister the Word of God around the world. When I oblige, I usually append to my signature Galatians 2:20. This gives me an opportunity to tell people what this verse means and why it has become increasingly precious to me as the years have come and gone. Indeed, my testimony has now become the subject of this book! Why is this verse so important to me? Because it gets to the heart of the most essential matters of the Christian life. As F. B. Meyer puts it, this is Paul's "confession of the power of the Cross in his own life. It stood between him and the past. His self-life was nailed there, and this new life was no longer derived from vain efforts to keep the Law, but from the indwelling and [overflowing] of the life of Jesus—the perennial spring of John 4:14." (Not I But Christ)

**John MacArthur** - Legalism's most destructive effect is that it cancels the effect of the Cross....To go back under the law would be to cancel one's union with Christ's sacrifice on the cross and therefore to go back under sin. ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Lightfoot** says: . . . 'I have been crucified with Christ.' A new turn is thus given to the metaphor of death. In the last verse it was the release from past obligations; here it is the annihilation of old sins. The two however are not unconnected. Sin and law loose their hold at the same time. The sense of feebleness, of prostration, to which a man is reduced by the working of the law, the process of dying in fact, is the moral

link which unites the two applications of the image: see Rom. xii. 5, 9-II. Thus his death becomes life. Being crucified with Christ, he rises with Christ, and lives to God.

**McGee** says: There are many people today who talk about wanting to live the "crucified" life. That is not what Paul is talking about in this verse. We are not to seek to be crucified with Christ. We have already been crucified with Him. The principle of living is not by the Law which has slain us because it found us guilty. Now we are to live by faith. Faith in what? Faith in the Son of God. You see, friend, the death of Christ upon the cross was not only penal (that is, paying the penalty for our sins), but it was substitutionary also. He was not only the sacrifice for sins; He was the substitute for all who believe. Paul declares, therefore, that under the Law he was tried, found guilty, was condemned, and in the person of his Substitute he was slain. When did that take place? It took place when Christ was crucified. Paul was crucified with Christ.

**Simpson** says: This is the end to which the Spirit is always working, not to develop in us a character, a set of human virtues and high qualities that we can call our own, but to form Christ in us and teach us to live in constant dependence upon Him. It is not a state, but a relation, a union with a Person, a living Presence who carries in Himself all the forces and resources of our new life....He expresses it in that incomparable passage which is the very essence of the Gospel of the deeper Christian life. "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" (Gal. 2:20). Here the substitution is so complete that not only is the old I of the natural self left out and crucified with Christ, but even the new I that has risen with Him is suppressed, and Christ, as a personal Presence, takes its place. Even the very faith by which this life is maintained in union with Jesus is not our faith, but the faith of the Son of God actively manifested in us by virtue of that substitution through which He gave Himself to be instead

**I have been crucified with Christ** (Christo sunestauroumai) - Only two words in Greek which literally is "with-Christ I-have-been-jointly-crucified."

**Eadie** says: . . . "I have been crucified with Christ." Wondrous words! I am so identified with Him, that His death is my death. When He was crucified, I was crucified with Him. I am so much one with Him under law and in suffering and death, that when He died to the law I died to the law. Through this union with Him I satisfied the law, yielded to it the obedience which it claimed, suffered its curse, died to it, and am therefore now released from it— from its accusations and its penalty, and from its claim on me to obey it as the means of winning eternal life. By means of law He died; it took Him and wrought its will on Him. As our Representative in whom we were chosen and in whom we suffered, He yielded Himself to the law, which seized Him and nailed Him to the cross. When that law seized Him, it seized at the same time all His in Him, and through the law they suffered and died to it. Thus it is that by the law taking action upon them as sinners they died to the law

**Gutzke** says: This truth is even more clearly stated in verse 20, where Paul writes, "I am crucified with Christ." He means that by faith he belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he accepts in the Lord Jesus Christ death to himself even as it came to Him. The believer joins Him on Calvary's cross and reckons himself indeed to be dead. He reckons himself to be dead by faith; it is an exercise of faith. "I am crucified with Christ" in the flesh; "nevertheless I live." He was Paul the apostle. He was a missionary. He was a teacher and a preacher. But he says, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Yet not I," in the sense of his human ego. He was not the old Saul the Pharisee, "but Christ liveth in me." There is a new life in him, and it is the life of Christ.

As **Bartlett** says "It is hardly necessary to say that Galatians 2:20 is one of the pre-eminently great texts of Scripture ([Memorize it!](#)). Better, perhaps, than any single verse, it summarizes Paul's philosophy of life. And for untold numbers of believers it has been a polestar of faith, the very essence of what CHRIST means to them. We may very profitably devote to it long hours of [meditation](#) and study. In this lesson we can but touch upon the highlights of interpretation. The fact remains that we have been crucified with CHRIST. The perfect tense expresses action begun in the past and continuing in the present. Positionally, our crucifixion with CHRIST occurred the moment we accepted Him as our LORD and SAVIOUR; but the effects of our acceptance of His finished work for us on the Cross will continue through all eternity! There is, however, an experimental (**Ed**: or [experiential](#)), as well as a positional, aspect to our being crucified with CHRIST. Justification should issue in sanctification. To realize that we are made holy in position should help us to become holy in condition (**Ed**: Only possible of course as we learn to dependent daily on the "Source," the Holy Spirit and not the "good intentions" of our flesh!). Many a Christian, however, wants to take a Pullman sleeper at justification and wake up in glorification, without covering on foot the rough intermediary road of progressive sanctification (**Ed**: See discussion of [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)). On the other hand, not a few believers fall short of the full measure of victorious living though failure to grasp the transforming truth of identification with CHRIST; they depend upon what they can do for themselves in their own strength (**Ed**: cp John 6:63, John 15:5, etc), instead of resting upon the finished work of their SAVIOUR **Ed**: cp Mt 11:28-30)." ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**Harrison** says: These amazing words of the apostle we conceive to contain the finest, clearest statement in a single sentence anywhere to be found of how the Christian life is really to be lived. But why is it here this early in the epistle, before the exposition has even begun? And why is it in the first person singular, when it gives the great essentials of Christian living for all believers? Many times I have quoted these words and spoken from them, but never until now have I seen them in their true light. They are the clincher to Paul's claim for the Gospel he preaches. It works. It is authoritative, authenticated as it is by the presence and power of the Author Himself. It is as though Paul said, "The Christ-centered Gospel I preach is allsufficient. I am demonstrating its sufficiency in my own experience. Since I met Christ on the Damascus road my life-principle is entirely changed. I no longer depend upon self-effort, much less law regulation. Christ lives in me. The life I now live is Christ-controlled. His control is perfect and complete."

**Spurgeon** - When a man finds and knows himself to be linked with Christ, his life is altogether a new life. Crucified, then dead. Crucified, then the old life is put away. Whatever life a crucified man has must be new life. Whatever you have of life was not given you till you came into union with Christ. It is a new thing—as new as though you had been actually dead and rotted in the tomb and then had started up at the sound of the trumpet to live again.

**Matthew Henry** says: He is crucified, and yet he lives; the old man is crucified, but the new man is living. Sin is mortified, and grace quickened. I live, and yet not I. He has the comforts and the triumphs of grace; and yet that grace is not from himself, but from another. He is crucified with Christ, and yet Christ lives in him. He is interested in the death of Christ, so as to die unto sin; and yet interested in the life of Christ, so as to live unto God. He lives in the flesh, and yet lives by faith; to outward appearance he lives as other people do, yet he has a higher and nobler principle that supports him, that of faith in Christ. Those who have true faith live by that faith.

**H A Ironside** says: We are not trying to work for our salvation, we are saved through the work that He Himself accomplished. We can look back to that cross upon which He hung, the bleeding Victim, in our stead, and we can say in faith, "I am crucified with Christ." It is as though my life had been taken, He took my place; "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live." As I was identified with Him in His death on the cross now I am linked with Him in resurrection life, for He has given me to be a partaker of His own glorious eternal life. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I." It is not the old I come back to life again, "but Christ liveth in me." He, the glorious One, is my real life, and that "life which I now live in the flesh," my experience down here as a Christian man in the body, "I live"—not by putting myself under rules and regulations and trying to keep the law of the Ten Commandments but—"by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." As I am occupied with Him, my life will be the kind of life which He approves.

**Crucified with** ([4957](#)) ([sustaurou](#) from [sun](#) = together with, speaks of an intimate union + [staurou](#) = to crucify from [stauros](#) = cross) means to crucify, affix or nail to a cross with another. Only the worst criminals suffered crucifixion in Paul's day. This same verb was used of the 2 thieves who were "crucified with" Christ although only one was "vicariously" or "spiritually" crucified with Him, specifically the one who "was saying (imperfect tense = over and over again) Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom! (Luke 23:42) The preposition [sun](#) (see discussion) speaks of a believer's union or identification with Christ (see ["Union With Christ"](#)). The use of the perfect tense is very instructive, signifying that the believer has been crucified with Christ at a specific point in time in the past and that the effects of this this crucifixion persist or continue into the present. Stated another way, the perfect tense speaks of a past completed action having present finished results.

Commenting on the perfect tense **Wuest** says "Paul uses it to show that his identification with Christ at the Cross was a past fact, and that the spiritual benefits that have come to him through his identification are present realities with him. By this statement he also shows how he **died to the law**, namely by dying with Christ who died under its penalty. The law's demands were satisfied and therefore have no more hold on Paul. But thus being crucified with Christ, meant also to Paul, **death to self**. When Paul died with Christ, it was the Pharisee Saul who died. What he was and did up to that time passed away so far as he was concerned Saul was buried, and the old life with him. The dominating control of the Adamic nature had its power over him broken." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

**F F Bruce** adds that "The perfect tense...emphasizes that participation in the crucified Christ has become the believer's settled way of life." ([Epistle to the Galatians](#))

**Illustration** - When [James Calvert](#) (see [biography](#)) went as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, the captain of the ship sought to turn him back, crying out "You will lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages" Calvert only replied, "We died before we came here." In short, James Calvert had appropriated and had put into practice the truth of Galatians 2:20 and had identified with the Cross of Christ. He had relinquished his life, having died to James Calvert, to the world, to the flesh, and to the devil.

When Jesus died upon the cross,  
He took our sin and shame;  
He offers us His righteousness,  
A gift for us to claim. —Sperr

**Oswald Chambers** - Galatians 2:20 is foundation truth and experimental truth in one—These words mean the breaking of my independence and surrendering to the supremacy of the Lord Jesus. No one can do this for me, I must do it myself. There is no possibility of debate when once I am there. It is not that we have to do work for God, we have to be so loyal to Jesus Christ that He does His work through us. We learn His truth by obeying it. (He shall glorify me : Talks on the Holy Spirit and other themes)

**Joe Ranney** gives us a **practical paraphrase** of Galatians 2:20 which all believers can apply to their life "My pocketbook has been crucified with Christ and I no longer exclusively spend on my selfish wants, because Christ lives in me. The spending life I now live is by faith and obedience to the Great Commission's call and can be successfully achieved because He loved me and gave Himself for me." ([BacktotheBible](#))

**No longer  
SELF CENTERED  
But now  
CHRIST CENTERED!**

**And it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me** Saul the self-righteous Pharisee, died, but Paul the great apostle, lives. The ego remained. It is no longer a self-centered life that he lives, but a Christ-centered one. His new life is a Person, the Lord Jesus living in Paul. And through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus is manifest in his life. The new life is no longer, like the former one, dependent upon the ineffectual efforts of a man attempting to draw near to God in his own righteousness. The new life is a Person within a person, living out His life in that person. Instead of attempting to live his life in obedience to a set of rules in the form of the legal enactments of the Mosaic law, Paul now yields to the indwelling Holy Spirit and cooperates with Him in the production of a life pleasing to God, energized by the divine life

resident in him through the regenerating work of the Spirit. Instead of a sinner with a totally depraved nature attempting to find acceptance with God by attempted obedience to a set of outward laws, it is now the saint living his life on a new principle, that of the indwelling Holy Spirit manifesting forth the Lord Jesus." ([Galatians Commentary](#))

Paul had to state, "Christ lives in me," (Gal.2:20) before he could declare, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). In that phrase he sums up the whole of Christian experience. In that one comprehensive utterance is gathered up life FROM Christ, life WITH Christ, life IN Christ, and life FOR Christ. Paul, in effect, is affirming that "living IS Christ," which parallels the statement that "Christ . . . is our life" (Col. 3:4).

**Spurgeon on no longer I who live** - How many first-person pronouns are there in this verse? Are there not as many as eight? It swarms with "I" and "me." The text deals not with the plural at all. It does not mention someone else nor a third party far away, but the apostle treats of himself, his own inner life, his own spiritual death, the love of Christ to him, and the great sacrifice that Christ made for him. This is instructive, for it is a distinguishing mark of the Christian religion that it brings out a man's individuality. It does not make us selfish; on the contrary, it cures us of that evil. But still it does manifest in us a selfhood by which we become conscious of our personal individuality in an eminent degree.

In one sense believers are to live as imitators of Christ (cf 1Cor 4:16, 11:1, 1 John 2:6, Eph 5:1,2, Php 3:17+) but Galatians 2:20 teaches us that this new life is more than **imitation** -- it is **"incarnation"**! "Christ lives in me". It is this living and loving union with Christ that enables me to moment by moment overcome the world, the flesh and the devil and to accomplish God's good and perfect will in my life. As discussed above Christ has sent His "Chief Operating Office" (so to speak), the Holy Spirit, Who provides the supernatural power to live a life that imitates Christ. Indeed, Christ was enabled by the same Holy Spirit to live His life on earth and give us a perfect example of how it is even possible to imitate Him (cp Acts 10:38, 39 sums up in two verses Jesus' 3.5 year ministry on earth beginning with His "anointing [at His baptism] with the Holy Spirit and with power.")

**John MacArthur** - The true Christian life is not so much a believer's living for Christ as Christ's living through the believer.

The great revivalist preacher **John Wesley** wrote that **"Christ lives in me"** and as such "Is a fountain of life in my inmost soul, from which all my tempers, words, and actions flow. (Wesley, J. Wesley's Notes)

**Spurgeon on Christ lives in me** - I do not voice a better epitome of Christian experience than this. This is the daily walk of a true child of God; if he lives after any other sort, then he does not live a Christian's life at all. Christ living in us, ourselves living upon Christ, and our union to Christ being visibly maintained by an act of simple faith in Him--this is the true Christian's life.

## LIVING BY FAITH

**The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**- The crucified life is a life of faith, trusting in the sufficiency of the Son to live His life through me. Since it is an "exchanged life" if I see "no change in my life" there is cause to question whether I have truly been crucified with Christ.

**Luther** observed, "My physical life 'in the flesh' is but the mask under which lives another, namely, CHRIST, my true life."

**Bartlett** - Like deep-sea divers who, while working on the ocean's floor, live by the oxygen pumped down to them from above, so our life in this world of time and sense is really sustained by that higher life which we live in CHRIST. ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**M R DeHaan** explains that Paul is saying "I died in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, through faith I was identified with Him, so that God imputes **Ed**: puts on my "spiritual account") to me everything that happened to the Saviour in Whom I have put my trust; and since He met all the demands of the law, paid the penalty and died under its curse, I (because I was represented in Christ through grace) suffered the same penalty and God today considers me as though I actually, personally, hung on the Cross myself, and met the full penalty of the law, which is eternal death. That is Paul's testimony, and every believer who is in Christ can truly say, I too am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." (De Haan, M. R. Studies in Galatians: Kregel Publications)

**Live (2198) (zao)** refers literally to natural physical life (opposite of death, Acts 22:22, 25:24, 28:4, Ro 7:1-3, 1Cor 7:39, of Adam = 1Cor 15:45; 2Cor 4:11 = refers to natural lives of believers; Php 1:22 - "to live on in the [physical] flesh"; 1Th 4:15,17 = believers physically alive at time of Rapture; Heb 2:15; Heb 9:17; James 4:15 = "we shall live" physically if God so wills it), to come to life after death (Mt 9:18), to recover life after sickness (Jn 4:50).

**Zao** refers to supernatural, spiritual life (cf Jn 11:25, 26), Paul explaining that Christ **lives** because of the power of God." (2Cor 13:4) This is the sense of the verb in Gal 2:20.

**By faith** is literally **in faith** - in the sphere of faith. We live physically in the sphere (atmosphere) of oxygen. We live spiritually in the sphere of faith.

**William MacDonald** - Faith means reliance or dependence. The Christian lives by continual dependence on Christ, by yielding to Him, by allowing Christ to live His life in him. Thus the believer's rule of life is Christ and not the law. It is not a matter of striving, but of trusting. He lives a holy life, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love to the Son.

**Spurgeon on I live by faith** - Does faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him, suggest to the redeemed man that he should be industrious and active? Assuredly it does, for it sets the divine Savior before him as an example. And where was there ever one who worked as Jesus did? It is no small thing for a man to be roused by such an example and to be made a partaker of such a spirit.

**Martin Luther** - When Paul said I now live in the flesh, he didn't mean that he lived a chronically sinful life. "By the term 'flesh' Paul does not understand manifest vices. Such sins he usually calls by their proper names, as adultery, fornication, etc. By 'flesh' Paul understands what Jesus meant in the third chapter of John, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh'. (John 3:6) 'Flesh' here means the whole nature of man, inclusive of reason and instincts. 'This flesh,' says Paul, 'is not justified by the works of the law.'"

**John Eadie** adds "Faith was the element in which he lived; his life was not only originated instrumentally by it, but it was also sustained in faith. [Commentary on Galatians](#))

**Bartlett** explains that "The validity of **faith** rests upon the stability of its object. **Faith** in thin ice may have tragic consequences. As we have already stated in another connection, CHRIST must be the object of our faith if we are to be saved. There are many voices in our day bidding us, with a great show of wisdom, to have **faith in faith**, not in a theological CHRIST, in order to be saved. That is to say, our salvation lies in believing wholeheartedly in something - what that something may be is immaterial. Nonsense! As well tell a man to have faith in his own digestive system and to ignore any narrow-minded distinction between food and poison - the difference between mushrooms and toadstools is purely a matter of taste!" ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**Guzik** - The focus of this verse isn't the flesh, it is faith. "Faith is not simply a topic about which Paul preached from time to time. Nor is it a virtue which he practised occasionally. It is central in all that he does." (Morris)

**Luther** - Faith connects you so intimately with Christ, that He and you become as it were one person. As such you may boldly say: 'I am now one with Christ. Therefore Christ's righteousness, victory, and life are mine.' On the other hand, Christ may say: 'I am that big sinner. His sins and death are mine, because he is joined to me, and I to him.'

**Faith (4102) (pistis)** is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. In the present context our new life is lived **by faith in the Son of God**, that is, by counting upon the One Who lives within. We place our trust in God and His Son's trustworthiness or faithfulness to fulfill what He has promised. Biblical faith is not a passive reception of God's mercy but rather an active entrusting of oneself to the bountiful mercy of a gracious God. Faith involves a personal decision and a commitment. Jesus provided one of the best illustrations of this trust when He declared that "Whosoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Mark 10:15). A child trusts themselves to their parents, putting themselves without worry or concern, into their parent's care. This is what our Father desires in His children. We now live a life of faith - saved by faith, live by faith, walk by faith. In short, is what it means to walk by the Spirit.

**Macgregor** - When men come to die with Christ on the cross, He comes to live in them by His Spirit!

Dying with Jesus, by death reckoned mine,  
Living with Jesus, a new life divine,  
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine,  
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine.  
—Whittle

**Phil Newton** adds that "The word **"now"** (3568) gives emphasis to the reality of the believer's present condition. He is not dealing in strange mysteries for a few select saints. He is talking about the spiritual condition of all believers. As we come to understand more of the work of Christ on our behalf, more of what took place in justification, we will find ourselves living in greater dependence upon Jesus Christ in daily life (**Ed**: And I would say more specifically in greater dependence of the Spirit's filling and empowering). How are you living **how**"? We are not in any respect bordering upon "New Age" thinking of god-consciousness or being a god. Paul says, 'No, I'm still living in this body. I am **flesh** and blood. But I am not living in this body the same way I used to live'. That is because of the reality that the old Paul was crucified with Christ. The old Paul with his animosity and hatred, with his pride and covetous spirit, met the judgment of God at the cross. There is a new resident in his life: Jesus Christ. "Christ lives in me!" I remember reading someone's definition of a Christian a number of years ago, as 'a Christian is a person in whom Jesus Christ lives'. That is the essence of Paul's explanation of a Christian in 2 Corinthians 13:5+, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that **Jesus Christ is in you**--unless indeed you fail the test?" I often ask those professing faith in Christ, 'Do you know that Jesus Christ lives in you?' How do you know this? In short, the reality of His life will keep showing up in your thoughts, your desires, your longings, your obedience, your tongue (Ed: Don't misunderstand -- this does not mean we won't still have a struggle with sin because we will! Before Christ we chased after sin, but now sin chases after us, so to speak!). Everything that Jesus Christ touches is affected in some way. Yes, we do grow in this--that is our sanctification--but the reality that He is in me, affecting all of my life, is the reality of a child of God. ([The Sweet Fruit of Justification](#))

**John MacArthur** explains the believer's death with Christ as it relates to the Law writing that "If a man is convicted of a capital crime and is put to death, the law obviously has no more claim on him. He has paid his debt to society. Therefore, even if he were to rise from the dead, he would still be guiltless before the law, which would have no claim on his new life. So it is with the believer who dies in Christ to rise in new life. He is free forever from any claim of the law on him. He paid the law's demand when he died in Christ. His physical death is no punishment, only a release to glory provided in his union with Christ. Legalism's most destructive effect is that it cancels the effect of the cross... The old man, the old self is dead, crucified with Christ, and the new man lives (Col 3:9, 10-notes Col 3:9; 3:10) ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) -

[Galatians](#)

**Spurgeon** exhorts all believers - My brethren, let me say, be like Christ at all times. Imitate him in "public." Most of us live in some sort of public capacity—many of us are called to work before our fellow-men every day. We are watched; our words are caught; our lives are examined—taken to pieces. The eagle-eyed, [argus-eyed](#) world observes everything we do, and sharp critics are upon us. Let us live the life of Christ in public. Let us take care that we exhibit our Master, and not ourselves—so that we can say, "**It is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me**"

#### [Before the Throne of God](#)

(Vocal by Selah- Awesome!)

Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong, a perfect plea  
A great high Priest whose Name is Love  
Who ever lives and pleads for me  
My name is graven on His hands  
My name is written on His heart  
I know that while in heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart  
No tongue can bid me thence depart

Oh

When Satan tempts me to despair  
And tells me of the guilt within  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end to all my sin  
Because the sinless Savior died  
My sinful soul is counted free  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me  
To look on Him and pardon me

Behold Him there the risen Lamb  
My perfect spotless righteousness  
The great unchangeable I am  
The King of glory and of grace  
One with Himself I cannot die  
My soul is purchased by His blood  
My life is hid with Christ on high  
With Christ my Savior and my God!  
With Christ my Savior and my God!

One with Himself I cannot die  
My soul is purchased by His blood  
My life is hid with Christ on high  
With Christ my Savior and my God!  
With Christ my Savior and my God!

**Who loved me, and gave Himself for me** - "There is need for warmly personalizing the mighty truths of the atonement. Let me not only know that CHRIST died for the world; let me feel that He loved me and gave Himself for me. It matters not how much heat there is in the central heating plant if I neglect to turn on the radiators in my own apartment. Let us open our hearts in prayer and meditation to the love of JESUS for us individually. There is the closest relationship between deepened love and strengthened faith." (Bartlett [Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**Don Anderson** - When we look at this phrase in reference to the PAST, it refers to our SALVATION. When we look at it in view of the PRESENT, it focuses on our SANCTIFICATION, or being made holy.

**Martin Luther** asked "Did the Law ever love me? Did the Law ever sacrifice itself for me? Did the Law ever die for me? On the contrary, it accuses me, it frightens me, it drives me crazy. Somebody else saved me from the Law, from sin and death unto eternal life. That Somebody is the Son of God, to whom be praise and glory forever."

**Loved** (25) ([agapao](#)) "expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (MacArthur) "Agapao speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

THE COST OF THE FATHER'S LOVE - John 3:16 "For God so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

THE DEPTH OF THE SON'S LOVE - Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also **loved** the church and gave Himself up for her.

**Spurgeon** - It is true that He loves us now, but Paul also wrote truly, "Who loved me." The verb is in the past tense. Jesus loved me upon the cross, loved me in the manger of Bethlehem, loved me before the earth was. There never was a time when Jesus did not love His people. Believe, get a hold of the precious truth that **Christ loved you eternally**. The all-glorious Son of God chose you and espoused you unto Himself, that you might be His bride throughout eternity. Here is a blessed union indeed.

### FOR ME!

**Gave Himself up for me** - I should have paid the penalty of death for my sin, but Jesus voluntarily took my place giving Himself over to the powers of evil to die a death He did not deserve, that I might live a life I do not deserve.

**John Calvin** observes that "**For me** is very emphatic. It is not enough to regard Christ as having died for the salvation of the world; each man must claim the effect and possession of this grace for himself personally.

As **Spurgeon** exhorts us "Take these blessed words of the apostle, and put them in your mouth, and let them lie there as wafers made with honey, till they melt into your very soul: 'Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'"

**Campbell** - In essence Paul affirmed, "If He loved me enough to give Himself for me, then He loves me enough to live out His life in me." [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#)

**Gave...up** (3860) ([paradidomi](#)) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another.

**Guzik** observes on **loved...gave Himself** - The past tense is important. William Newell, in his commentary on Romans, speaks to the importance of the past tense in the word **loved**. "It is this past tense Gospel the devil hates ... Let a preacher be continually saying, 'God loves you, Christ loves you,' and he and his congregation will by and by be losing sight of both their sinner-hood and of the substitutionary atonement of the Cross, where the love of God and of Christ was once for all and supremely set forth."

**Spurgeon** - Paul looks at the matter of salvation from the point of view suggested by grace. If any man might have said, "The Son of God, whom I have loved, and to whom I have given myself," it would have been the apostle. On another occasion, speaking of the Lord, he said, "Whose I am, and whom I serve" (Acts 27:23). But here he does not think of himself—or of what he had been led to do for the Lord—but only of what the Lord had done for him. He dug down to the foundation of salvation; he traced the stream of grace back to the fountainhead. Therefore he spoke of "the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

**Jerry Bridges** has an illustration of **no longer I but Christ**...

Before battery-powered watches were invented, wristwatches had to be wound every day. A watch's stem was used not only to adjust the hands but also to wind up the mainspring. The gradual unwinding of the mainspring throughout the day drove the mechanism of the watch to keep time. The **Gospel of justification by faith in Christ** is the mainspring of the Christian life. And like the mainspring in old watches, it must be wound every day. Because **we have a natural tendency to look within ourselves for the basis of God's approval or disapproval** (Ed: Beloved, does this not hit a nerve so to speak - it certainly does in life, even after 25 years of walking clothed with His righteousness!), we must make a conscious daily effort (Ed: But even this God pleasing "effort" I would submit is initiated and enabled by the Spirit [see Php 2:13, Heb 13:20-21] Who indwells us [1Cor 3:16, 6:19], whose goal is ever to glorify Christ [Jn 16:14] - so He will continually be drawing our hearts and minds back to the "Source" of righteousness - Jer 23:5, 1Cor 1:30, 2Cor 5:21, Ro 3:21-25, Php 3:7-9) to look outside ourselves to the righteousness

of Christ, then to stand in the present reality of our justification. Only then will we experience the stability that the first bookend is meant to provide...

Paul's resting in Christ's righteousness rather than his own did not cause him to slack off in his pursuit of Christlikeness. Rather, it motivated him to press on and strain forward (Php 3:12-14). Now his zeal was motivated not by a desire to earn God's favor but by love and gratitude for the righteousness of Christ that was his by faith. This is the motivating power of the Gospel...

The Christian life may now be more of a duty than a joyous response to the gospel. Consequently we may not experience the motivating power of the Gospel. That's why we need to intentionally bathe our minds and hearts in the Gospel every day.

Remember, we need the Gospel not only as a door into an initial saving relationship with Christ, but also as the first bookend to keep our daily lives from becoming a performance treadmill. As we rely on Christ's righteousness in this manner, far from leading to a license to sin, it actually motivates us to deal with the sin we see in our lives by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to God. ([The Bookends of the Christian Life](#) - This book is highly recommended - But don't "speed read" it! In this book Bridges goes on to explain two other Gospel enemies besides [1] self-righteousness - [2] Persistent guilt and [3] Self-reliance and then discusses in very practical manner the second bookend of the spiritual life = The Power of the Holy Spirit.)

#### [Christ Liveth in Me](#)

Daniel W. Whittle

Once far from God and dead in sin,  
No light my heart could see;  
But in God's Word the light I found,  
Now Christ liveth in me.

As rays of light from yonder sun,  
The flowers of earth set free,  
So life and light and love came forth  
From Christ living in me.

As lives the flower within the seed,  
As in the cone the tree,  
So, praise the God of truth and grace,  
His Spirit dwelleth in me.  
(Ed: How does Christ now live in me?)

With longing all my heart is filled,  
That like Him I may be,  
As on the wondrous thought I dwell  
That Christ liveth in me.

#### **Refrain**

Christ liveth in me,  
Christ liveth in me,  
Oh! what a salvation this,  
That Christ liveth in me.

[\(play hymn\)](#)

#### **D L Moody - Five aspects of Crucifixion in Galatians:**

1. I crucified in Christ. Gal 2:20.
2. Christ crucified for me. Gal 3:1.
3. The flesh crucified in me. Gal 5:24.
4. The world crucified unto me. Gal 6:14.
5. I crucified unto the world. Gal 6:14.

---

#### Finding God's Best by John Hunter

John 12 records how the Lord had come to Jerusalem for the last time in His earthly life. Ahead of Him lay all the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. In verse 24, the Lord spoke of this coming tragedy in an unusual way: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He told of the basic rule for reproduction in the vegetable kingdom: unless a seed dies it can never reproduce itself. He saw Himself as the heavenly corn of wheat which was to die so that the glorious harvest might appear. In one sense the Lord Jesus died so that He might never be alone. This we know, and this we believe. Then in verse 26 the Lord continues, "If any man serve me, let him follow me . . ." Make sure you really understand this basic pattern for service. If I want to serve Him, then I must follow Him. But notice where I first follow Him: into the grave. This is the whole point of this amazing illustration. If life is to come through me, in my service for Him, then I, too, must be willing to follow Him into the grave. This is what Paul says in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ," not "I was," or "I will be," but a continuing present tense experience of identification with Christ in the place of death. He saw himself as dead for Christ's sake, but then he continued: "Nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." There was a special purpose in Paul seeing himself dead with Christ. He wanted the indwelling Christ to take over in his life so that the life of Christ might be made manifest in his mortal flesh. In this way the power would be released, fulfilling the power for service. In this way Paul would be a witness for the Living Christ—in thought, and word, and deed—thus fulfilling the plan for service. (source unknown)

John Hunter says: This is how we are complete in Christ. Whether or not we realize it we as believers are indwelt by the risen Christ. He indwells us so that He can continue in our daily lives what He began through His death on the cross. By the saving death of Christ, He is the sin-bearer. Through the saving life of Christ, he is the burden-bearer. There are so many Christians today struggling hard to live the Christian life, facing problems, and bearing burdens God never intended them to bear

---

This is the liberating truth of identification with Christ.

I'm dead to sin through Christ my Lord,  
For in His death I also died;  
It's written clear in God's own Word,  
And, praise His name, I'm justified!  
I'm dead to sin, thus I must live,  
To Christ alone who gave His all;  
And for His love I can't but give  
My life and gifts, both great and small.  
I'm dead to sin, so I must serve  
My God and King each day and hour;  
What He commands I must observe,  
And seek to do with heav'nly pow'r.  
I'm dead to sin, O blessed thought!  
I now can rest from care and strife;  
My fight He has forever fought,  
And now I live His risen life.

Stephen F. Olford

---

**Halverson** points out: Actually that which a man does to help God's redemptive work results in hindering it. To try to help God is as much a hindrance as to try to resist Him. The surgeon's glove serves to illustrate this. It is almost transparent as he puts it on for the operation. That glove may hinder the surgeon in two ways: First of all, it must not resist the slightest movement of his finger. It must be almost as if the glove is not there at all, as he works through it in his delicate surgery. If there is the least rigidity, the slightest inflexibility, the trace of resistance to his touch, the glove must be discarded. But what would happen if that rubber glove would say, "I have some original ideas about this operation. I am going to contribute my own efforts." For the glove to initiate its own efforts would be as disastrous as if it were to refuse to yield to the surgeon's movements. Either way the work of the surgeon is hindered, whether the glove resists or assists. The life God requires is not difficult—it is impossible to live. There is no man or woman who can by their

own efforts live the Christian life. The only one who is able to live the life required by God is the Son of God Himself. And the whole point of Christian faith is that He will live this life in and through the man who consents to Him. But by the farthest reach of the imagination, by all the struggle and effort of which man is capable, he will never come close to living the life or following the example of Jesus Christ. In fact, the man who is trying to live the Christian life is failing by the very fact that he is trying. We shall see a bit later that there is an effortlessness that ought to characterize the Christian life. Not I, but Christ my every need supplying, Not I, but Christ my strength and health to be. Christ, only Christ for body, soul, and spirit; Christ, only Christ live Thou Thy life in me. My body is just covering under which another lives, even Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ through you is fully adequate to do everything. Oh that the Holy Spirit might impress upon our minds the fact that Christ is fully capable of meeting all of my needs, and in living through me that life which is pleasing to God. (source unknown)

Halverson goes on to point out: But what is even more tragic is represented by the person who takes Christianity seriously, and then allows himself to be hopelessly enslaved by a futile struggle to please God according to standards that are impossible of attainment and were never intended by God to be reached by a struggle. To these deluded and frustrated people the Christian life becomes a dogged, slavish observance of hard and inflexible rules with all the joy and spontaneity removed. This too is totally unlike the virile Christianity of the New Testament. The divine record portrays a life that is singularly free from this awful, impossible endless struggle to be good or to do good. This was neither the letter nor the spirit of the primitive church. There was an exhilaration and dynamic, a freshness, an aliveness, a drive and thrust about those first century Christians that is inescapable when one reads the New Testament with even a slight degree of understanding. They were not struggling to be something or to do something. They were not counting on human resources; they were channels for Divine resources. God had invaded their lives and was at work in them, for them, through them. They were simply letting God do His work, using them as the tools. Their bodies were the "temple of the living God," and their faith was manifested by consent, submission and obedience. They suffered for this faith, to be sure, but even in their suffering and martyrdom there was a quality that could be explained on no other ground than that God was doing a superhuman work in them. The joy of their hearts was the supreme fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." Certainly no one would dare to assume, by the farthest stretch of the imagination, that these early Christians were willing to lay down their lives simply for the privilege of struggling to be good. They were not martyrs for an ethical standard or for a set of religious rules and regulations. They had been given life through Jesus Christ, and death for His sake simply meant the inheritance of this life of which present peace and joy were but the foretaste. To die meant gain! The joy, the power, the vitality, the drive of those Christians will only be repeated when we learn to renounce the fruitless struggle and allow the life of God in Christ to fill us, possess us and use us in the Divine program. When we forsake our confidence in human resources and yield to the reign of God in our lives, the world will see a demonstration of true Christianity that will command itself to thoughtful men.

---

Why did [Hudson Taylor](#) love that great old hymn "Jesus I am Resting, Resting"? The reason being he had found the secret. Play the [Steve Green vocal](#) as you meditate on Galatians 2:20 asking the Spirit of Christ to make it your daily reality for the glory of the Father. Amen and Amen.

#### [Jesus I am Resting, Resting](#)

Jesus, I am resting, resting  
In the joy of what Thou art  
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee  
And Thy beauty fills my soul  
For by Thy transforming power  
Thou hast made me whole  
Oh, how great Thy loving kindness,  
Vaster, broader than the sea  
Oh, how marvelous Thy goodness  
Lavished all on me!  
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,  
Know what wealth of grace is Thine  
Know Thy certainty of promise  
And have made it mine  
Jesus, I am resting, resting  
In the joy of what Thou art  
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart  
Ever lift Thy face upon me,  
As I work and wait for Thee;  
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus  
Earth's dark shadows flee.

---

**Lord, Make My Life a Miracle by Raymond C. Ortlund** - God is so patient. Think how many times He has flashed lightning across the sky. Through the ages it would splinter huge trees. It would run a cow down a path, while men watched and wondered. All the time God was trying to tell men something. One stormy day a man finally went out with a kite and a key. All heaven was probably bending over saying, "All these years we've been trying to tell them about electricity. Look, look, he's got it! At last, he's got it!" And soon the world lit up. How long, how long you and I have been vaguely aware—theoretically aware—of God's presence with us! I think all heaven's waiting, and perhaps saying, "I think they might get it. Look, look, maybe at last they're going to get it!" Christian, you may have been saved for 15, 30, 40 years. Maybe at last you're going to get it! The Christian life is to be lived from the center out, with God. How could you have missed it? Live from the center out. At the center is Jesus Christ and all His glory in you. (source unknown)  
Begin the sweet discipline of acknowledging Him, moment by moment. Live with Him, have a running conversation going with Him, rejoice in Him.

#### [CLICK HERE FOR NUMEROUS DEVOTIONALS](#)

#### [BELOW RELATED TO GALATIANS 2:20](#)

#### **Galatians 2:21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."**

Greek: Ouk athetō (I do set aside - V-PIA-1S) tēn charin tou Theou ei gar dia nomou dikaiosynē ara Christos dōrean (for nought) apethanen (V-AIA-3S)

Amplified: [Therefore, I do not treat God's gracious gift as something of minor importance and defeat its very purpose]; I do not set aside and invalidate and frustrate and nullify the grace (unmerited favor) of God. For if justification (righteousness, acquittal from guilt) comes through [observing the ritual of] the Law, then Christ (the Messiah) died groundlessly and to no purpose and in vain. [His death was then wholly superfluous.]

Phillips Consequently I refuse to stultify the grace of God by reverting to the Law. For if righteousness were possible under the Law then Christ died for nothing!

Wuest I do not thwart the efficacy of the grace of God. For if through law comes righteousness, then Christ died without a cause [Ferdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

NET Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside God's grace, because if righteousness could come through the law, then Christ died for nothing!

GNT Galatians 2:21 ο κ θερ τ τ χ ριν το θεο ε γ ρ δι ν μου δικαιοσ νη, ρα Χριστ ς δωρε ν π θανεν.

NLT Galatians 2:21 I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

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

ESV Galatians 2:21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

ASV Galatians 2:21 I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought.

CSB Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

NIV Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

NKJ Galatians 2:21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

NRS Galatians 2:21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

YLT Galatians 2:21 I do not make void the grace of God, for if righteousness be through law -- then Christ died in vain.

NAB Galatians 2:21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

NJB Galatians 2:21 I am not setting aside God's grace as of no value; it is merely that if saving justice comes through the Law, Christ died needlessly.

GWN Galatians 2:21 I don't reject God's kindness. If we receive God's approval by obeying laws, then Christ's death was pointless.



BBE Galatians 2:21 I do not make the grace of God of no effect: because if righteousness is through the law, then Christ was put to death for nothing.

- **I do not nullify the grace of God** Ga 2:18 Ps 33:10 Mk 7:9 \*marg: Ro 8:31
- **for if righteousness comes through the Law** Ga 2:16 Gal 3:21 Gal 5:2-4 Ro 10:3 Ro 11:6 Heb 7:11
- **then Christ died needlessly**: Isa 49:4 Jer 8:8 1Co 15:2,14,17
- Galatians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S SHORT "MEDITATION" ON THE GRACE OF GOD

**I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly**- The Amplified functions almost like a "mini-commentary" - "[Therefore, I do not treat God's gracious gift as something of minor importance and defeat its very purpose]; I do not set aside and invalidate and frustrate and nullify the grace (unmerited favor) of God. For if justification (righteousness, acquittal from guilt) comes through [observing the ritual of] the Law, then Christ (the Messiah) died groundlessly and to no purpose and in vain. [His death was then wholly superfluous.]"

**McGee** says: The main thought in this verse is simply that if there had been any other way to save sinners, then God would have used that method. If a law or a religion could have been given that would save sinners, God would have given it. The only way that an infinite God could save you and me was to send His Son to die. He was willing to make the supreme sacrifice.

**I do not nullify the grace of God**- The two couplets (1) grace and Law and (2) faith and works both are like "oil and water!" They absolutely do not mix! Peter's actions were in a very real sense **work of the Law** (even though Peter knew better) and the effect of his actions Peter was as if he had "preached a sermon" that one is saved by grace plus works of the Law. Had this message been allowed to [resonate](#) throughout the young Christian community, it would have had the "net effect" of negating the grace of God.

**Campbell** - The clear implication is that Peter and the others who followed him were setting aside God's grace. The essence of grace is for God to give people what they have not worked for (cf. Ro 4:4). To insist on justification or sanctification by works is to nullify the grace of God. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**MacDonald** - The grace of God is seen in His unconditional gift of salvation. When man tries to earn it, he is making it void. It is no longer by grace if man deserves it or earns it.

**Boice** - This last sentence of ch. 2 is introduced abruptly and from a new point of view. In the preceding verses Paul has answered the objections of his critics. Now he objects to their doctrine, showing that if they are right, then Christ has died in vain. The heart of Christianity lies in the grace of God and in the death of Jesus Christ. To insist on justification by works undermines the foundation of Christianity by nullifying God's grace. Paul's logic is incontrovertible. Yet many still pursue the fallacious logic of the legalizers. They suppose that to earn their salvation is somehow praiseworthy and noble, when actually it is vainglorious and ignoble. True nobility (and humility) is to accept what God offers

**John MacArthur** on **nullify the grace of God** - In effect he was saying to Peter, "By withdrawing from fellowship with your Gentile brothers you take your stand with the Judaizers and against Christ. You **nullify the grace of God** by denying the need for Christ's death, just as you did when you rebuked the Lord for declaring it was necessary for Him to suffer, be killed, and raised on the third day (see Mt. 16:21-22). [MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Galatians](#)

The law says DO, grace says DONE.

**Leon Morris** adds that "To nullify grace would be to put one's trust, not in salvation as God's free gift, but in one's own efforts. To do this is to reject grace altogether, and relying on one's puny effort means that one nullifies that grace."

**Luther** - If my salvation was so difficult to accomplish that it necessitated the death of Christ, then all my works, all the righteousness of the Law, are good for nothing. How can I buy for a penny what cost a million dollars?

**Bartlett** - To attempt to earn by merit what GOD gives in mercy is to frustrate the grace of GOD.

**Clow** - The deepest heresy of all, which corrupts churches, leavens creeds with folly, and swells our human hearts with pride, is salvation by works. "I believe," writes John Ruskin, "that the root of every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has suffered, has been the effort to earn salvation rather than to receive it; and that one reason why preaching is so ineffective is that it calls on men oftener to work for God than to behold God working for them." (The Cross in Christian Experience)

**do not nullify** (set aside, reject, declare invalid) (114) ([atheteo](#) from [áthetos](#) = not placed from [a](#) = without + [thetós](#) = placed) means to regard as nothing, to declare invalid, to act as though it were annulled (made ineffective, inoperative or nonexistent), to spurn, to despise. To do away with what has been laid down. In the papyri [atheteo](#) was used of loans which were repaid and cancelled and for the rejection of certain officials who were described as inefficient and incapable of doing their duty. It was also used of grain rejected by the inspector as unfit for food.

Paul also uses [atheteo](#) in **Galatians 3:15** "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one **sets it aside** or adds conditions to it." (Here [atheteo](#) refers to a legal enactment = annul, declare invalid).

**Atheteo** has a somewhat similar sense in

Mk. 7:9; He was also saying to them, "You nicely **set aside** the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

1 Cor. 1:19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

**Wuest** adds that "All these meanings (of [atheteo](#)) could be applied here to the act of adding law-works to faith as the ground of a sinner's justification (which was the message Paul figured would be given by Peter's withdrawal from eating with the Gentiles). One may preach that Christ died for our sins, but if he adds works to faith as the means of the acceptance of the salvation Christ procured for lost sinners at the Cross, he has thwarted the efficacy of grace, for **the fundamental meaning of grace is that salvation is given free, without money and without price** There is no salvation for the sinner who depends in the least upon good works as a means of acceptance with God." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3 - used by permission](#))

In contrast to Paul's denial that he set aside the grace of God, that is exactly what the Judaizers did by adding works. **W E Vine** explains that "if salvation is by grace it is no more of works, and, conversely, if it is of works it is no more of grace; works and grace are incompatibles, they are mutually exclusive; see Romans 11:6."

I like the KJV rendering **I do not frustrate the grace of God** - As **Bartlett** comments "To attempt to earn by merit what GOD gives in mercy is to frustrate the grace of GOD, so far as our experience of it is concerned. "There is," as K.S. Wuest puts it, "no salvation for the sinner who depends in the least upon good works as a means of acceptance with GOD." How important it is then for us to emphasize this in dealing with souls whom we seek to lead to CHRIST! If men could be saved by works of the law, there was no need for CHRIST to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28)." ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

**Marvin Vincent** on the **grace of God** - **Charis** is, primarily, that which gives joy (chara). Its higher, Christian meaning is based on the emphasis of freeness in a gift or favor. It is the free, spontaneous, absolute loving-kindness of God toward men. Hence often in contrast with the ideas of debt, law, works, sin. Sometimes for the gift of grace, the benefaction, as 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:6, 19; 1 Pet. 1:10, 13. So here: the gracious gift of God in the offering of Christ.

**The grace of God** - In effecting salvation works and grace are diametrically opposed. In Romans Paul declared "But if it ("remnant according to God's gracious choice" Ro 11:5) is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace." (Ro 11:6)

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Judaizers wanted to mix Law and grace, but Paul tells us that this is impossible. To go back to the Law means to "set aside" the grace of God. Peter had experienced God's grace in his own salvation, and he had proclaimed God's grace in his own ministry. But when he withdrew from the Gentile Christian fellowship, he openly denied the grace of God. Grace says, "There is no difference! All are sinners, and all can be saved through faith in Christ!" But Peter's actions had said, "There is a difference! The grace of God is not sufficient; we also need the Law." Returning to the Law nullifies the Cross: "If righteousness came by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21+). Law says DO! Grace says DONE! "It is finished!" was Christ's victory cry (John 19:30). "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

This exact phrase **grace of God** is found 21x in 20 verses in the NAS - Lk. 2:40; Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:26; 20:24; Rom. 5:15; 1 Co. 1:4; 3:10; 15:10; 2 Co. 1:12; 6:1; 8:1; 9:14; Gal. 2:21; Col. 1:6; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 12:15; 1 Pet. 4:10; 5:12

**Grace** (favor) (5485) (**charis**) is "God's gratuitous favor in the scheme of redemption." (Jamieson) **Expositor's Greek Testament** writes that the **grace of God** "is His kindness and love of man (Titus 3:4+) (a) as a revelation, in the Incarnation, and also (b) in its visible results; and so it is both heard and recognized (Col 1:6+). Accordingly Barnabas could see it at Antioch (Acts 11:23+).

**If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly** - Paul's logic is simple here - if one could be saved by keeping the Law, "there was no need for Christ to die. In other words Christ's death would have been in vain. As Paul said the same thing in a slightly different way in Chapter 3 "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

Earlier Paul had stated "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified (declared righteous) by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified (declared righteous) by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (declared righteous)." (Gal 2:16+)

The writer of Hebrews has a parallel thought asking

Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

**Righteousness** (1343)(**dikaosune** from **dikaos** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm and in Biblical terms the "standard" is God and His perfect, holy character. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. **Dikaosune** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ ([Click here](#) to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

Paul uses **dikaosune** 4x in Galatians - Ga 2:21, Gal 3:6, 21, Gal 5:5.

Gal 3:6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

Gal 3:21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, the **righteousness** would indeed have been based on law.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting (eagerly) for the hope (absolute assurance) of **righteousness**. (Here righteousness has an eschatological flavor as it speaks of the dual hope of Christ's Second Coming and our being made like Him in glorification. O glorious day!)

### CHRIST DEATH NEEDLESS? AWAY WITH SUCH A THOUGHT!

**Christ died needlessly** - This is Paul's conclusion if the foregoing were true (e.g., if our works could merit righteousness), which praise God it is not true!

**MacArthur** - The two pillars of the Gospel are the grace of God and the death of Christ, and those are the two pillars that, by its very nature, legalism destroys. The person who insists that he can earn salvation by his own efforts undermines the very foundation of Christianity and nullifies the precious death of Christ on his behalf. ([MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Galatians](#))

**Spurgeon** - Paul is arguing against the idea of salvation by works, or salvation by ceremonies; and he shows, beyond all question, that salvation is by the **grace of God** through faith in Jesus Christ. Mark the strength of the apostle's argument in the 21st verse: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in sin." That is to say, there was no need for Christ to die, the crucifixion was a superfluity, if men can save themselves by their own good works. Paul is very emphatic about the matter. He puts it as plainly as possible: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

**Spurgeon** in another note on Gal 2:21 - If a man can be saved by his own works, and willings, and doings, then Christ's death was an unnecessary piece of torture; and, instead of being the most glorious manifestation of divine love, it was a shameful waste, putting upon Christ a terrible burden of suffering which was totally unnecessary.

**Needlesly** (groundlessly) (1432)(**dorea** from **dorea** = "a gift," something bestowed freely, without price, or compensation, as in Jn 4:10; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 9:15) Hence **dorea** also means "freely," "gratuitously," as in Mt 10:8; Ro 3:24; 2 Co 11:7; 2 Th 3:8; Rev 21:6; 22:17. But it also = "gratuitously" in the sense of causelessly, as in Jn 15:25 ( "THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE."), of the hatred of the Jews for the Lord Jesus, and "vainly," or without either purpose or result, as here in Gal 2:21. It means to be without purpose.

**Bartlett** rightly remarks that "A man wanting to cross the Atlantic would be fit for a lunatic asylum if, instead of taking passage on an ocean liner, he insisted upon trying to beat the steamship by swimming the three thousand miles or more between New York and Liverpool. And yet his insanity would be wisdom alongside the folly of the sinner who despises the finished work of JESUS CHRIST and trusts to his own good works to get him into heaven." ([Galatians 2:11-21 - Personal Explanation](#))

#### If Righteousness Is by the Law, Christ Died in Vain

"I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21).

Those who are seeking salvation by the Law are ruthlessly committing two sins.

1. They are frustrating the grace of God. The sweetest note of the Bible is, "By grace are ye saved." But, "if it is of grace, it is not of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." If it is of works it is not of grace, "otherwise works are no more works."  
He who would be saved by Law is fallen from grace.
2. They are causing Christ to die in vain. The agonies of Calvary were needless if salvation is by works. We go a step further, and say — If it was possible for man to be saved by the Law, apart from the Cross of Christ, then the very birth of Christ, His life, His death, and His resurrection were all in vain.

The one who seeks salvation through the deeds of the Law, compels God the Father to take the role of a cruel despot. He presents God as giving Christ to die, making His soul an offering for sin, and laying upon Him the iniquity of us all, when man, as he alleges, needs no atoning sacrifice.

Away with the blasphemy of salvation by works!

Let legalists and moralists consider carefully the results of their moral boastings. What is the need of a door, if one is going to climb up some other way?

The "be good and be saved" frustrate the grace of God. They make Christ to die in vain. After all of this they are irrevocably lost, because there is no other way than grace and no other door than the Cross of Christ. - Robert Neighbour Sermons and Bible Studies

### EXCURSUS ON BARNABAS SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

**Barnabas** ("son of exhortation" "son of encouragement") - All God's children should be "Barnabases" for all have the Spirit indwelling them and it is He (the **Parakletos** - the one who comes alongside to encourage, to comfort - Jn 14:15KJV) Who enables us to be **encouragers** rather than **discouragers** (hinderers, dissuaders). Beloved, how would you characterize your words to others today, yesterday, this past week, etc -- encouraging and uplifting or discouraging and deflating? Think upon these things! Luke records that Barnabas was a man filled with (controlled by, empowered by) the Holy Spirit Who I would submit enabled him to live up to his name!...

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. 23 Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. 25 And he 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. (Acts 11:21-27)

**W E Vine** has a note on **Barnabas** -

Barnabas,—a Heb. name, **bar** = son, **nabas** = prophecy; Luke gives as the Greek equivalent "son of exhortation" or "of comfort," Acts 4:36 **paraklesis**, see note on the corresponding verb, **parakaleo**. 1 Thessalonians 2:11); the two translations are reconciled by Paul's words, "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men...comfort," 1 Corinthians 14:3. This name was given him by the apostles, apparently to describe the prominent characteristic of his ministry. His own name was Joseph; his ancestors, of the tribe of Levi, had settled in Cyprus, where he was born. In the Bible laudatory words are used of few men, and of these **Barnabas** is one, "he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," Acts 11:24. It was **Barnabas** who introduced Paul to the apostles when he returned to Jerusalem after his conversion, vouching for the good faith of the onetime persecutor to those naturally suspicious of him. Barnabas stood high in the confidence of the apostles, and became their delegate when the Greeks began to turn to God at Antioch. Arrived at that city the sight of the grace of God gladdened him; he strengthened the hands of the believers, and many people were "added to the Lord." Feeling the need of a colleague, and, it may be, remembering the word of the Lord concerning Saul at his conversion, that his life work was to lie among the Gentiles, Barnabas sought him out and from henceforth for some years the two were closely associated in the work of the gospel. Later, however, they separated in consequence of a disagreement over a younger fellow worker, John Mark. Thereafter the writer of the Acts is silent about Barnabas, though a brief and friendly reference to him by the apostle Paul at a later date shows him still actively engaged in the work of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 9:6.

It is interesting to note that one of the titles of our Lord Jesus Christ is **The Consolation** (**paraklesis** = Encouragement) **of Israel** (Luke 2:25). Recall that the consolation describes one who is a source of comfort in a time of suffering, grief, sadness, disappointment. The next time you experience these feelings, run to the One named "The Consolation of Israel." The writer of Hebrews adds "since He Himself was tempted (tested) in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid (see study of this wonderful verb **boetheo**) of those who are (continually being) tempted (tested)." (Heb 2:18) Indeed, our Lord Jesus is the true "Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement and Consolation." In fact Jesus imparts to His brethren consolation and encouragement not just in time but throughout eternity! Indeed, because we as believers are indissolubly united to Him by the unbreakable New Covenant in His blood, we are in eternally one with Him and will be encouraged throughout eternity. Ponder that thought a moment if you think heaven will be dull! You and I will be encouraged eternally by the One Who is the preeminently perfect Consoler, Christ Jesus Himself! **Hallelujah! Amen!**

[Click for more devotionals related to Barnabas the Encourager](#)

Warren Wiersbe in Bible Personalities has this entry on **Barnabas**

Thus we see that Barnabas staked his all—his reputation, his life, his church which was dearer than life—on Paul's sincerity. He gave Saul the weight of his influence, which weight was like a mighty anchor to a ship tempest beaten. He gave his hand, which hand was like a keen sword to one sorely pressed in battle. Had it not been for that warm and strong extended hand of Barnabas, Saul might have been chilled into obscurity.... (R. G. Lee, Glory Today for Conquest Tomorrow, p. 89)

Barnabas played second fiddle, but he played it so well that the Kingdom of God made progress. He rode second in the Gospel chariot, but he did it with such humility and joy and gratitude until heaven will forever rejoice that he was "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" and that, because of him, "much people were added to the Lord" [Acts 11:24]. (Lee, Glory Today, p. 96)

When Paul had gone back to Tarsus and Barnabas had gone to electrify with his wisdom the Church at Antioch, the older preacher was sad because he had all the glory. He wanted the young man to share it; he determined that he should share it. He went to Tarsus and brought him to the scene of triumph. He gave him a place among the Christian workers. He went about continually in his company, that men might say, "There go Barnabas and [Saul]." He knew well the power of association—how a tarnished name if linked with a great name may lose its tarnish; and he resolved that Paul should reap the advantage of such a union. (Read the entire 21 page article by [George Matheson in The Representative Men of the Bible](#))

"Are You A Barnabas?" - James Scudder

Are you a person who likes to encourage others? I feel one of the best examples of an encourager is a teacher. They encourage the people they teach. There weren't many teachers who went out of their way for me when I was in school, but there are two that I remember as being a real encouragement to me. One in particular was a teacher I had in Jr. High. The class was supposed to nominate the one they thought had the best voice to represent the school team. At the end of the session, the teacher said, "I think you picked the wrong one. I think James Scudder has the best voice. You should have nominated him." I was floored. No one had ever done that for me before. The class voted again, this time for me. That teacher made it possible for me to be a preacher today. There is a man in the Bible named Barnabas. His name actually means "Son of Encouragement." He was a man whom everyone liked because he constantly thought of others. In one particular instance, Barnabas wanted to encourage a man the other Apostles didn't think too highly of. This man had made some mistakes, but Barnabas saw the good that was in him and continued to encourage him. Are you willing to look past other's faults and see the good? Then you are like Barnabas. Take a moment and be an encouragement in someone's life today. Encouragement is oxygen of the soul - James Scudder

## BACKGROUND FOR PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS Charles Swindoll

Source - [Insight for Living](#)

Paul wrote to the churches in southern Galatia ([See discussion by Wilkinson and Boa](#)) after having a hand in starting them on his first missionary journey to Asia Minor. Paul's close relationship to these churches helps to explain the extremely strong tone he took with them from the very beginning of the letter. Galatians exhibits Paul at his angriest, as he risked the good favor of the converts in those churches to make sure they were on the path of truth and not led off into deception. In fact, to emphasize the seriousness of his purpose, he took the pen from his scribe and wrote the end of the letter himself in large letters (Galatians 6:11).

Upon arriving back in Antioch from his first missionary journey after eighteen months on the road, Paul received a report that the churches he had started in Galatia had fallen into hard times—specifically, they had fallen into error. A group of [Judaizers](#)—those who sought to make living under the Mosaic Law a requirement of the Christian faith—had gained an influence in the Galatian churches.

Paul wrote the book a few months before his attendance at the Jerusalem Council in AD 49, a meeting where the apostles would take up this very topic (Acts 15:1–30) [See discussion of Timing](#). In advance of the Jerusalem Council, Paul's letter speaks wisdom and clarity into the first real controversy that plagued the church in its early years—the relationship between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles. Paul's aggressive tone shows just how important it was to him that the people embrace unity in Christ, no matter their racial distinctions. For him, this was no minor issue, as he went so far as to call the Galatians deserters of Christ, people turning from the truth toward a gospel contrary to the one they had received from Paul (Galatians 1:6–9).

When the Galatians fell away so quickly from the gospel of grace Paul had preached to them, they also made clear their disloyalty to **Paul's authority as an apostle**. Therefore, Paul began the letter to the Galatians by spending two chapters defending that very issue. Only in chapter 3 did he begin to get to the heart of their error; namely, that these Galatians sought to be justified by the Mosaic Law. In contrast, Paul presented his argument that justification comes to people by faith in Jesus Christ, not by their works under the Law.

Part of the problem that confronted the Galatians came in one of the arguments made by the [Judaizers](#). These false teachers suggested that to live by grace and in freedom meant to live a lawless and therefore degenerate life. And so in the final chapters of the letter, Paul made clear that justification—an act of grace through faith—need not result in a sinful lifestyle.

Because Christians have been freed from bondage to the sinful nature, we now have the path of holiness open to us. Unfortunately, the false teaching brought to the Galatian churches by the [Judaizers](#) has been extremely difficult to root out even today. We must walk a fine line—on one hand, we do not want to fall into the legalism that the Galatians struggled with, but on the other, we cannot just live as if anything goes. The Christian's commitment to Christ is based on the free gift of grace through faith, but as Paul articulated at the end of Galatians, it also results in a life of walking by the Spirit. ([Insight for Living](#))

## WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS? [Bruce Wilkinson, Kenneth Boa](#)

The North Galatian Theory holds that Paul was speaking of Galatia in its earlier, more restricted sense. According to this theory, the churches of Galatia were north of the cities Paul visited on his first missionary journey. Paul visited the ethnographic Galatia (the smaller region to the North) for the first time on his second missionary journey, probably while he was on his way to Troas (Acts 16:6). On his third missionary journey, Paul revisited the Galatian churches he had established (Acts 18:23) and wrote this epistle either in Ephesus (A.D. 53–56) or in Macedonia (A.D. 56). This theory is supported by the church fathers, but this may be due to the exclusive use of the ethnographic sense of Galatia by the second century. Advocates of this view also point to Luke's apparent use of Galatia in the northern sense (Acts 16:6; 18:23). Similarities between Galatians and Romans (written in A.D. 57) also help to support this late-date theory for Galatians. But it is hurt by the fact that Acts does not say Paul evangelized in North Galatia. In fact, he would have had to have taken a radical detour to the northeast on his second missionary journey to do so, whereas no such detour would have been necessary if he went to South Galatia.

According to the South Galatian Theory, Paul was referring to Galatia in its wider political sense as a province of Rome. This means that the churches he had in mind in this epistle were in the cities he evangelized during his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:13–14:23). This was just prior to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), so the Jerusalem visit in Galatians 2:1–10 must have been the Acts 11:27–30 famine-relief visit. Galatians was probably written in Syrian Antioch in A.D. 49 just before Paul went to the Council in Jerusalem. This theory is supported in several ways: (1) Paul consistently referred to geography in the political sense in his epistles. (2) If Galatians was written after the Jerusalem Council as the North Galatian theory holds, it is probable that Paul would have referred to that authoritative decree to bolster his argument in this epistle, yet it is not mentioned. (3) It is unlikely that Peter would have acted as he did (Gal. 2:11–21) after the Jerusalem Council. (4) This theory fits against the background in Acts 13–14, but the North Galatian theory has no corresponding background. (5) The South Galatian cities that Paul visited were more strategic from an evangelistic point of view than those in the North because of their location, population, and commerce. (6) Barnabas (mentioned three times in 2) would have been more familiar to the South Galatian churches than to the North Galatian churches because he was not with Paul on his second missionary journey, when the churches in North Galatia were supposedly established.

Paul wrote this epistle in response to a report that the Galatian churches were suddenly taken over by the false teaching of certain [Judaizers](#) who professed Jesus yet sought to place gentile converts under the requirements of the Mosaic Law (Gal 1:7; 4:17, 21; 5:2–12; 6:12–13). ([Talk Thru the Bible](#))

## TIMING OF PAUL'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM [Phil Newton](#)

We need to consider the historical setting for Paul's visit to Jerusalem. Bible students are divided over the timing of the incident described in our text. It is a choice between whether its roots are in Acts 11:27-30 in which Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church in Antioch with an offering for the Jerusalem church, or whether it referred to the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council. Without going into all of the arguments for either position, I am of the opinion that what Paul is describing in Galatians 2 was the summation of his visit mentioned in Acts 11:27-30. Let me enumerate a few of the reasons for this interpretation.

**First**, the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) was a public meeting of the apostles and elders, then later with the entire Jerusalem church. Paul states that his meeting was instead "in private to those who were of reputation," referring to Peter, James, and John. No public meeting was mentioned.

**Second**, the fruit of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council was an official letter from the apostles, elders and brethren in Jerusalem which stated clearly the apostolic position *against* the necessity of circumcision or works

of the law for salvation. In Galatians, Paul does not refer to this letter at all, which would have been a conclusive evidence that his opponents, the [Judaizers](#), were out of sync with the apostolic gospel. It would have crushed the weight of the [Judaizers](#) arguments against Paul. Calvin comments, "While his opponents were falsely claiming the support of the apostles and doing their utmost to harass Paul, how careless he would have been to pass over the decree circulated among them all which undermined their position" [quoted by L. Morris, *Galatians*, 65].

**Third**, there is no mention of a meeting with the apostles *and* elders, along with the Jerusalem church in the Galatians narrative. That would have added to Paul's support since the Jerusalem Council was an open meeting and the [Judaizers](#) were claiming the support of "headquarters."

**Finally**, Paul indicates that he went up to Jerusalem to deal with the gospel message "**because of a revelation**," rather than by the appointment of the Antioch church to deal with the [Judaizer](#) problem (Acts 15:2). Surely, if he had in mind the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council, he could have added that he had the backing of the church at Antioch in approaching the Jerusalem church with the problem of the legalistic teaching.

I go into detail on this because it shows us how serious-minded the early disciples were about the contents of the gospel message. If Paul went to the trouble of traveling to Jerusalem to privately discuss the gospel, then traveled another time, probably 2-3 years later, in an official capacity on behalf of the Gentile church, then we see that the first century church was embroiled in great controversy early-on. The Church made up of Gentiles and Jews could not be divided on the issue of the gospel. For it is only *one gospel* that saves all who come in faith to Jesus Christ. ([Galatians 2:1-10 Affirming the Gospel Message](#))

---

**MORE IN DEPTH STUDY:** If you would like to delve into discussion of the problems regarding dating (and other issues) of Galatians here are some journal articles:

- [Joe Morgado Jr., "Paul in Jerusalem: A Comparison of His Visits in Acts and Galatians" \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 37.1 \(March 1994\): 55-68.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 1. Autobiographical Data," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 51.2 \(Spring 1969\): 292-309.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 2. North or South Galatians?" \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 52.2 \(Spring 1970\): 243-266.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 3. The 'Other' Gospel," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 53.2 \(Spring 1971\): 253-271.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 4. The Date of the Epistle," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 54.2 \(Spring 1972\): 250-267.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 5. Galatians and Christian Origins," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 55.2 \(Spring 1973\): 264-284.](#)
- [Ronald Y. K. Fung, "A note on Galatians 2:3-8," \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 25.1 \(March 1982\): 49-52.](#)
- [Martin Hengel "Paul in Arabia," \*Bulletin for Biblical Research\* 12.1 \(2002\): 47-66.](#)
- [Walter Russell: \*Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?\*](#)
- [Robert H. Stein, "Relationship of Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-35: two neglected arguments," \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 17.4 \(Fall 1974\): 239-242.](#)
- [Timothy Wiarda, "Plot and Character in Galatians 1-2," \*Tyndale Bulletin\* 55.2 \(2004\): 231-252.](#)

## DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO BARNABAS SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

**Vance Havner - Barnabas** was the Friend of the Suspected. When the Christians were fearful of Paul, the new convert, Barnabas recommended him to the brethren. When Antioch was moved under the preaching of the gospel, Barnabas was sent to investigate and make sure it was authentic. When Paul was for dropping John Mark as a companion, Barnabas took him and he turned out all right after all. There is a lot of suspicion among the brethren these days and we need more than one Barnabas.

---

### Building Bridges Acts 9:17-27

**Barnabas** took him (Saul/Paul) and brought him to the apostles. —Acts 9:27

A new believer recently attended our worship service. He had long, multicolored, spiked hair. He dressed in dark clothes and had multiple piercings and tattoos. Some gaped; others just gave him that "It's good to see you in church, but please don't sit next to me" smile. Yet there were some during the greeting time who went out of their way to welcome and accept him. They were bridge builders.

**Barnabas** was that bridge builder for Saul (also called Paul). When Saul arrived in Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion, many disciples were afraid of him and doubted his transformation (Acts 9:26). He didn't receive a warm welcome from the Jerusalem church greeters for good reason. Saul had a terrible reputation for persecuting Christians! But **Barnabas**, a Jewish convert, believed God's work of grace in Saul's life and became a bridge between him and the apostles (Acts 9:27).

Saul needed someone to come alongside him to encourage and teach him, and to introduce him to other believers. **Barnabas** was that bridge. As a result, Saul was brought into deeper fellowship with the disciples in Jerusalem and was able to preach the gospel there freely and boldly.

**New believers need a Barnabas in their lives.** We are to be a bridge in the lives of others. By Kevin M. Williams

Oh, I would be to others  
A cheering ray of light,  
Inspiring them with courage  
To climb some newfound height! —Bosch

Be a bridge of encouragement to someone today.

---

### Known For Compassion Acts 11:19-26

**(Barnabas)** was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. —Acts 11:24

During Major Gen. Mark Graham's 2 years as commander of Fort Carson, Colorado, he became known and loved for the way he treated others. One US Army colleague said: "I have never come across another general officer who was so compassionate and so concerned about the well-being of soldiers and their families." After losing one son to suicide and another who was killed in action, Mark and his wife, Carol, dedicated themselves to helping soldiers and their families cope with service-related stress, depression, and loss.

In the book of Acts, a follower of Christ was well known for his care and concern toward others. His name was Joseph, but in the early church, the apostles called him Barnabas—"son of encouragement." It was Barnabas who vouched for the newly converted Saul when others doubted the sincerity of his faith (Acts 9:26-27). Later, Barnabas brought Saul from Tarsus to teach the believers in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). And it was Barnabas who wanted to give John Mark a second chance after his failure on a previous missionary journey (Acts 15:36-38).

Compassion is an inner feeling resulting in outward action. It should be our daily uniform of service (Col. 3:12). By God's grace, may we be known for it. By David C. McCasland

Lord, help us be compassionate  
To people in their grief;  
Then tell them of the love of Christ,  
Who'll bring their souls relief. —Sper

True compassion is love in action.

---

### Giving Others A Push Acts 11:19-26

By Anne Cetas

**[Barnabas]** encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. —Acts 11:23

When Jean was a teenager, she often walked through a park where she saw mothers sitting on benches and talking. Their toddlers sat on the swings, wanting someone to push them. "I gave them a push," says Jean. "And you know what happens when you push a kid on a swing? Pretty soon he's pumping, doing it himself. That's what my role in life is—I'm there to give others a push."

Encouraging others along in life—that's a worthy purpose. Josés, a godly man mentioned in the book of Acts, had that gift as well. In the days of the early church, he sold some land and gave the money to the church to use for the less fortunate (Acts 4:36-37). He also traveled with Paul on missionary journeys and preached the gospel (Acts 11:22-26; 13:1-4).

You may know Josés as "Barnabas," which is the name the apostles gave to the "Son of Encouragement." When the Jerusalem church heard that people in Antioch were coming to know Jesus as Savior, they sent Barnabas because "he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). He "encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (Acts 11:23).

We too can give others a "push" of encouragement in their walk with the Lord.

Lord, I would be to others  
A cheering ray of light,  
Inspiring them with courage  
To climb some new-found height!  
—Bosch

A little spark of encouragement can ignite great endeavors.

---

#### Acts 15:37 READ: Acts 15:36-41

And **Barnabas** was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also. - Acts 15:37

In a moment of teenage carelessness, a sixteen-year-old girl wrecked her mother's car. She was uninjured, so she called home to tell her parents, fully expecting an angry reaction. Instead, her father asked only about her physical and emotional condition. When he arrived at the accident scene, he checked to make sure she was unhurt before turning his attention to the mangled auto being towed away. When it was time to go home, he handed her the keys to his car and got in on the passenger side. No angry tirade from this father! Just a lot of love and an overwhelming vote of confidence. "Words can't describe what my father's Godlike act did for my self-esteem that day," the young woman commented years later. The major impact of that event was not metal against metal; it was spirit against spirit. The daughter saw in her father the character of the God he loved.

When someone fails due to weakness, carelessness, or even sin, the hardest thing to do is to show forgiveness and Christlike love. It is easier to give the person a piece of our mind than a vote of confidence. We don't know why Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15). But we do know that he later wanted another chance to serve with them. And Barnabas gave it to him.

When God forgave us through His Son Jesus, we were given another chance—one we didn't deserve. That's the ultimate vote of confidence—and one we should not only accept for ourselves, but also give to others. —H V Lugt

Lord, may I be as quick to give second chances to others  
as I am to accept them for myself. Amen

---

#### Helping With Hurdles - Acts 15:36-41

Two are better than one....For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. —Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." - Acts 15:36

When my daughter Debbie was a little girl, she took ballet lessons. One dance exercise involved jumping over a rolled-up gym mat. Debbie's first attempt resulted in her bouncing off this hurdle. For a moment she sat on the floor stunned, and then she began to cry. Immediately, I darted out to help her up and spoke soothing words to her. Then, holding her hand, I ran with her until she successfully jumped over the rolled-up mat. Debbie needed my encouragement to clear that hurdle.

While working with Paul on his first missionary journey, John Mark faced a major hurdle of his own: Things got tough on the trip, and he quit. When Barnabas tried to re-enlist Mark for Paul's second journey, it created conflict. Barnabas wanted to give him a second chance, but Paul saw him as a liability. Ultimately, they parted ways, and Barnabas took Mark with him on his journey (Acts 15:36-39). The Bible is silent about John Mark's response when Barnabas helped him over his ministry hurdle. However, he must have proven himself, because Paul later wrote that John Mark "is useful to me for ministry" (2 Ti 4:11+).

When we see a believer struggling with an apparent failure, we should provide help. Can you think of someone who needs your help to clear a hurdle? By Dennis Fisher

Lord, I want to show the kindness of Your  
heart today. Please show me who I can help  
and in what way. I want my words and deeds  
to convey Your love. Amen.

Kindness picks others up when troubles weigh them down

---

#### Are You Ready? Acts 13:1-5

By Dave Branon

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work." —Acts 13:2

Three months before a planned missions trip, a friend and I were talking about the upcoming event. He said to me, "If anyone can't go, I'd be willing to step in and join you." This was not going to be an easy 8 days, for we would be painting, repairing, and fixing stuff in the July heat of Jamaica. Yet my friend seemed eager to go. About 6 weeks before we were scheduled to leave, there was an opening. I e-mailed my friend—whom I hadn't seen in the interim—and asked if he was still interested. He immediately responded, "Sure! And I got a passport just in case you asked." He had made sure he was ready—just in case he got the call to go. My friend's preparation reminds me of what happened back in the first century at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas were among a number of people getting themselves ready spiritually for whatever God might ask them to do, or wherever He might send them. They didn't prepare by getting a passport, but they "ministered to the Lord and fasted" (Acts 13:2). And when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work" (v.2), they were all set for the journey.

Are you preparing for what God might want you to do? When the Spirit says, "Go," will you be ready?

Keep your tools ready—God will find work for you.

---

#### Failure - Acts 15:36-41

But Paul insisted that they should not take [him] (Acts 15:38).

Get Mark, ... for he is useful to me (2 Timothy 4:11).

Although we can never undo a failure, we can learn from the experience and profit by it. A baseball pitcher who loses a game because he throws a fastball right where the batter wants it may come back four days later and hurl a shutout. He'll never erase the lost game from his record, but his failure can teach him valuable lessons that will help him to chalk up more wins than losses. In Acts we read that John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas when they started their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he soon departed from them (Acts 13:13). While he was at home, he apparently regretted what he had done, so he asked to be included the next time his older friends set out. Barnabas wanted to give him another chance, but Paul didn't, so they parted company and formed two teams—Barnabas taking Mark, and Paul taking Silas. Young Mark couldn't erase his first failure, but he must have learned from it because he became a respected Christian leader of his day. Further-more, God used him to write one of the four gospels; and Paul, in his second prison epistle to Timothy, asked for Mark, saying, "He is useful to me for ministry." It doesn't do any good to brood about what went wrong. Wishing we could do something over is an exercise in futility. Each day is new. With God's help we can succeed, if we learn from yesterday's failure.

Christians live in "the land of beginning again." —H.V. Lugt.

Failure doesn't mean you'll never succeed; it will just take longer

---

#### The Call Of Barnabas and Saul - Acts 13:1-12 - James Smith

After a missionary in China had been showing them the folly of idols, and had preached Jesus to them, one old man said—"Stop and tell us, for we cannot find the door." How sad to think of the multitudes who are groping in the dark for the door of eternal life and cannot find it. How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent. The Holy Ghost is very desirous to thrust out labourers; pray ye Him.

The young Church at Antioch had grown in number and power. Among the notable converts was [Manaen](#), who had been a companion of that Herod who ordered the death of John the Baptist, and who mocked the Lord Jesus Christ, "setting Him at naught." But by the grace of God he was plucked as a brand out of the fire. As the members of this Church "served and fasted," the Holy Spirit met their real need by pressing home to their hearts this message of definite direction, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul." Perhaps they had been waiting on the Lord for special guidance, as to how they might further the cause of Christ when this unmistakable call came—

1. It was a Divine Call. "The Holy Ghost said," etc. (Acts 13:2). They were as surely "called of God" as was Aaron. As all fitness for this service must come from Him, so also must the call. The Holy Ghost will

never choose a man possessed by the spirit of the world as an ambassador of the Kingdom of Christ.

**2. It was a Personal Call.** "Barnabas and Saul." There was no room for questioning as to whom the Lord meant, neither was there any occasion for envy or jealousy. The Holy Spirit divideth to every man severally as He will (1 Co 12:11). Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, is fit for the service of God. "No man taketh this honour unto Himself but he that is called of God" (Heb 5:4).

**3. It was a Call to Separation.** "Separate Me," etc. Barnabas and Saul were to be separated unto the Holy Ghost, that He might breathe the will of God through them, as He had done with the holy men of God in old time (2 Pe 1:21). To be used of the Holy Spirit we must be separated from the world, and entirely yielded unto Him, as vessels meet for His use. But we are not to suppose that those who remained in Antioch were not separated unto God. We can live the separated life anywhere by living for His glory.

**4. It was a Call to Work.** "For the work whereunto I have called them." Only those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus can have a hand in the work of this "new creation." We are not called to ease and idleness, but to be "workers together with Him," who hath called us into this holy calling. Have we entered into this work whereunto God, the Spirit, hath called us? Or are we idlers in His vineyard?

**5. It was a Call which met the Approval of the Brethren.** "They sent them away" (Acts 13:3), but not without "fasting and prayer." It would be a great blessing to the Church and the world to-day if the Church was anything like so willing to recognise, and send forth, those who have been called of the Holy Ghost to do the work of an evangelist. By their fruit ye shall know them. These holy men were "solemnly ordained," not with dinners and toasts! but with "fastings and prayer." There were no "hip, hip, hurrahs!" but there was a solemn doing of the will of God. Many modern ordinations are a scandal to the cause of Jesus Christ.

**6. It was a Call, Followed by Mighty Deeds.** How can we believe that we are called and empowered by God if "signs and wonders" worthy of God are not being done through us in His name? (Acts 13:5-12). Two wonders were wrought here by Barnabas and Saul (a) The overcoming of the sorcerer. This "child of the devil" and "enemy of all righteousness" was smitten with temporary blindness. The works of the devil were destroyed. (b) The conversion of the deputy (Acts 13:12). The salvation of the governor of the island, and the silencing of Elymas, the enemy of God, were surely works worthy of the Holy Ghost, unto whom Barnabas and Saul had been separated. - [James Smith Acts - scroll down to Acts 13](#)

---

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

Acts 13 - Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. - Acts 13:2

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the American government, fearing an invasion of Alaska, built a supply road all the way to the territory. The Alaska Highway ran through the Canadian Rockies and Yukon Territory, some of the roughest and most remote land on the continent. Yet in only about six months an enormous force of 16,000 engineers, surveyors, soldiers, and construction workers accomplished the job, carving a 1,422-mile-highway out of the wilderness.

This incredible engineering feat began with a single shovelful of dirt, just as any long journey must begin with a single step. That's how Paul's first missions trip began—with a single step. A step forward to say, "Yes, Lord." He had served on the leadership team in Antioch, which may be where he met Luke (tradition says Luke was from Antioch). The time had come for the church there to take its own next step in obeying the Great Commission, so at the right time the Holy Spirit moved and called Paul and Barnabas specifically to go.

One key point here is the community context for missions and purpose. Barnabas and Paul didn't take a strategy to the church and ask them to rubber-stamp it. Rather, God revealed His will to the church during a time of worship and fasting (v. 2). Fasting is done in order to hear God's voice more clearly, and He honored that desire. By laying hands on the two missionaries, the church identified with them, taking corporate responsibility for sending them out. Paul and Barnabas found their purpose in the context of the body of Christ. If you're wondering about your own purpose, this would be an excellent place to start.

A second key point to notice is the historic shift in ministry focus from Jews to Gentiles (vv. 45-48). By quoting Isaiah 49:6 in verse 47, Paul showed an awareness that God's love is for all peoples as well as of his own specific calling to preach to the Gentiles. The good news must be proclaimed "first for the Jew," but must just as surely be shared and declared globally (Rom. 1:16-17).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Are you familiar with the missionaries your church supports? How are the missionaries chosen and commissioned? In what ways are they accountable to your church for reporting back about their ministry? Who in your church stays in touch with and prays for these missionaries?

If you haven't been personally involved, prayerfully consider if God leads you to take steps to get to know these missionaries better, whether through serving on the missions committee, writing letters, or faithfully praying for their work

---

#### Resolution Acts 15:36-41

The contention became so sharp that they (Paul and Barnabas) parted from one another. —Acts 15:39

In May 1884, two young parents disagreed about what middle name to give their newborn son. The mom preferred Solomon; the dad, Shippe—both family names. Because John and Martha couldn't agree, they compromised on "S." Thus Harry S. Truman would become the only US president with an initial for a middle name. Over 120 years later, we still know about this conflict—but we also know that a reasonable resolution was reached.

In the New Testament, we read about another disagreement that has lived on in history. This one was between two missionaries: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15). Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on a trip to check on some churches they had helped previously (Acts 15:37). But Paul did not trust Mark because of an earlier incident (Acts 15:38). Paul and Barnabas disagreed so sharply that they parted ways (Acts 15:39). We still read about this argument 2,000 years later. What's important is not that it lived on in history, but that it didn't leave permanent relationship scars. Paul apparently reconciled with Barnabas, and in his final days asked for Mark to be with him because "he is useful to me for ministry" (2 Ti 4:11+).

Arguments happen. But let's make sure they are resolved. Grudges are a burden too heavy to carry. By Dave Branon

Arguments can lead to grudges,  
Which, if left, will cause a rift;  
But if we bring resolution,  
Our relationships won't drift.  
—Sper

A grudge is one thing that doesn't get better when it's nursed.

---

#### Galatians 2:1-5 TODAY IN THE WORD

We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. - Galatians 2:5

George Washington courageously served as commander of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. He was a fierce patriot and was unanimously elected as America's first president. Washington served reluctantly in our nation's highest office, especially upon entering his second term. He refused a third term. His commitment to American freedom was unflagging, but he longed at the end of his life to retire from public service and return to the pastoral countryside of Mount Vernon.

Everyone who fights for freedom usually does so at great personal cost. Freedoms are won by hard-fought battles, and the spiritual freedoms afforded by the gospel of Jesus had to be fiercely protected by Paul. The freedom to which Paul refers in the opening verses of Galatians 2 is the freedom to belong as a full-fledged member to the family of God exclusively because of the death of Jesus Christ of our behalf. The false teachers rejected this "free" gospel. They preached that Gentile Christians must participate in the Jewish rite of circumcision in order to receive full membership status in the divine covenant. No doubt they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures as evidence.

This false teaching had been circulating prior to the present situation in Galatia. Paul records here details about his second trip to Jerusalem, some fourteen years after his conversion, and well before this letter to the Galatians. Paul and Barnabas, along with Titus and presumably some other disciples, had gone to deliver an offering on behalf of the Gentile churches for those affected by a recent famine (cf. Acts 11:27-30). Titus was a Gentile, and despite those who had already been arguing for the necessity of circumcision, Paul records that Titus was not compelled by the leaders in Jerusalem to be circumcised. He was apparently received and fully embraced as a brother in Jesus Christ.

This matter of whether or not circumcision was necessary for believers was not a minor issue for Paul. It posed a critical threat to the integrity of the Christian gospel and the freedoms Jesus meant for His followers to enjoy.

**APPLY THE WORD** The followers of Jesus in the first-century had a sense of the "Jewishness" of the Christian gospel. We might not debate circumcision as necessary to follow Christ but we still wrestle with a "free" gospel. Every generation faces the temptation to add requirements to the gospel, creating lists of who is "in" and "out." As we study this letter, may our hearts be open to the Holy Spirit's instruction about how the gospel frees us from the burdens we might place on ourselves or others.

---

#### Galatians 2:1-5 TODAY IN THE WORD

Despite only three months of formal schooling and increasing deafness throughout his life, inventor Thomas Edison earned his place in history by creating numerous practical applications for electricity. Known as

the "Wizard of Menlo Park," Edison built such inventions as the microphone, record player and light bulb. He also improved the dynamo and designed the world's first central electric power station in New York City. Just as electricity was at the center of Edison's career and achievements, the gospel was at the center of Paul's identity and ministry. This is made abundantly clear in his opposition to legalism and in the incident described in today's reading.

Paul's contacts with the apostles after his conversion had been few and brief. Finally, "fourteen years later" (Gal 2:1), probably meaning since his conversion, he has some sort of official confrontation with church leaders in Jerusalem.

Titus is mentioned in Gal 2:1 because of a controversial issue which he represented. He was an uncircumcised Gentile Christian. People were asking: Should Titus be forced to submit to circumcision as part of the legal obligation for all Christian men?

Paul and Barnabas spoke to the mother church in a general way in public addresses. They also discussed the issue with church leaders privately and in greater detail explained the gospel Paul had been preaching among the Gentiles (Gal 2:2). He was trying to convince the church leaders of the validity of his position: that Gentiles were not under law. If he failed to do so, his past work, as well as present and future work, would be hindered.

APPLY THE WORD - Paul was above all committed to the truth of the gospel. In fact, he was so zealous for evangelism that he said: "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:22-23).

---

#### Galatians 2:1-10 TODAY IN THE WORD

James, Peter and John....recognized the grace given to me. - Galatians 2:9

A predominantly white church and a historically African-American church in Durham, North Carolina, meet together for Easter services every year. Though the worship styles differ, those who attend the joint service always remark how blessed they are by sharing in praise with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Yesterday we saw Paul claiming that the gospel he preached was legitimated by Jesus and not in need of approval from any earthly authority. In our text for today he emphasizes the fact that the ministry he has undertaken is in full unity with the other apostles. It was important to Paul and to the other apostles that Paul's ministry stood in continuity with the ministry of the Jerusalem church.

We may rightfully ask why this might be the case. Clearly Paul did not feel any need to have the authority of his ministry validated by other people. Jesus, the highest authority, had commissioned him. He needed no other confirmation. But Paul likely saw the need, perhaps through the revelation he received (Gal 2:2), to meet with the other apostles in order to ensure that the Gentile churches he had planted remain in full unity with the Jewish churches.

There are some significant lessons for us from this passage regarding the nature of unity in the church. First, we see that unity does not mean lack of diversity. The fact that Jew and Gentile were united by the gospel—without either one being forced to unite on the terms of the other—means that church can encompass all manner of diversity so long as the unifying factor is the gospel message. Second, the basis of the apostles' judgment points the way toward balancing unity and diversity in the church. The apostles recognized the presence of God's grace at work in Paul's ministry. That is, they confirmed that the gospel he preached was consistent with the message they proclaimed (Gal 2:2, 7); and, they saw that God was using Paul effectively among the Gentiles (Gal 2:8).

As we today seek to maintain both unity and diversity in the church, we would do well to look for God's grace at work.

APPLY THE WORD - When we praise God for an eternity in heaven, we will be surrounded by believers from every tribe and nation. Yet too often when we worship we are surrounded by people who look just like us.

### THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS MORE IN DEPTH

If you would like to delve into discussion of the problems regarding dating (and other issues) of Galatians here are some journal articles:

- [Joe Morgado Jr., "Paul in Jerusalem: A Comparison of His Visits in Acts and Galatians" \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 37.1 \(March 1994\): 55-68](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 1. Autobiographical Data," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 51.2 \(Spring 1969\): 292-309.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 2. North or South Galatians?" \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 52.2 \(Spring 1970\): 243-266.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 3. The 'Other' Gospel," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 53.2 \(Spring 1971\): 253-271.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 4. The Date of the Epistle," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 54.2 \(Spring 1972\): 250-267.](#)
- [F. F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems. 5. Galatians and Christian Origins," \*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Manchester\* 55.2 \(Spring 1973\): 264-284.](#)
- [Ronald Y. K. Fung, "A note on Galatians 2:3-8," \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 25.1 \(March 1982\): 49-52.](#)
- [Ronald Y. K. Fung, "Revelation and Tradition: The Origins of Paul's Gospel," \*The Evangelical Quarterly\* 57.1 \(Jan.-Mar. 1985\): 23-41.](#)
- [Martin Hengel "Paul in Arabia," \*Bulletin for Biblical Research\* 12.1 \(2002\): 47-66.](#)
- [Walter Russell- \*Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?\*](#)
- [Robert H. Stein, "Relationship of Galatians 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-35: two neglected arguments," \*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society\* 17.4 \(Fall 1974\): 239-242.](#)
- [Timothy Wiarda, "Plot and Character in Galatians 1-2," \*Tyndale Bulletin\* 55.2 \(2004\): 231-252.](#)

### DEVOTIONALS RELATED TO GALATIANS 2:20

- [See also more Devotionals and Illustrations Related to Galatians 2:20](#)

Our Daily Bread has the following illustration of Paul's teaching in the life of Augustine writing...

The story is told that when Augustine was still without God and without hope, the Holy Spirit convicted him on the basis of Paul's words in Romans 13:14 (see [note](#)), "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." Augustine acknowledged his sinfulness, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and became a different person. His entire outlook on life began to change because of his new nature.

One day he had to attend to some business in his old haunts in Rome. As he walked along, a former companion saw him and began calling, "Augustine, Augustine, it is I!" He took one look at the poor, disreputable woman whose company he had formerly enjoyed, and he shuddered. Reminding himself of his new position in Christ, he quickly turned and ran from her, shouting, "It's not I! It's not I!" Augustine had found the secret of Paul's words: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Satan would like to defeat us by telling us that we are no different than we were before we were saved. But God says that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And I'd rather believe Him, wouldn't you? - H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

---

**The Cross Spells F.I.N.I.S.** - To participate in the life of Christ, we must first be identified with Him in His death. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Ro 6:5+). Those of us who now have eternal life have died in the person of our sinless Substitute, Jesus Christ, just as surely as if we had consciously been present at Calvary. While in principle our crucifixion is thus an accomplished fact, in daily practice it should constantly mean "death" to the self-life!

A young man approached an older Christian with this question:

"What does it mean as far as this life is concerned to be 'crucified with Christ?'"

The believer replied,

"It means three things:

- (1) a man on a cross is facing in only one direction;
- (2) he is not going back; and
- (3) he has no further plans of his own."

Commenting on this, T. S. Randall wrote,

"Too many Christians are trying to face in two directions at the same time. They are divided in heart. They want Heaven, but they also love the world. They are like Lot's wife: running one way, but facing another. Remember, a crucified man is not coming back. The cross spells finis for him; he is not going to return to his old life. Also, a crucified man has no plans of his own. He is through with the vainglory of this life. Its chains are broken and its charms are gone."

In the light of these truths, would you say you are acting like a "crucified" Christian? - H G Bosch [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

If I would crucify the flesh, that Christ in me might reign,  
I must not spare my shrinking flesh, the crucifixion pain;  
'Tis either Christ or selfish I — what shall the answer be?  
Let self be crucified that Christ, alone, might live in me!  
—Reich

---

**Our Daily Bread** has a devotional adapted from Ethel Barrett's work ["It Only Hurts When I Laugh"](#)...

In her book *It Only Hurts When I Laugh*, Ethel Barrett tells how four outstanding servants of God died to self and sin.

**George Mueller**, when questioned about his spiritual power, responded simply, "One day George Mueller died."

**D. L. Moody** was visiting New York City when he consciously died to his own ambitions.

And evangelist **Christmas Evans**, putting down on paper his surrender to Christ, began it by writing: "I give my soul and body to Jesus." It was, in a very real sense, a death to self.

**John Gregory Mantle** wrote, "There is a great difference between realizing, 'On that Cross He was crucified for me,' and 'On that Cross I am crucified with Him.' The one aspect brings us deliverance from sin's condemnation, the other from sin's power."

Recognizing that we **"have been crucified with Christ"** (Gal. 2:20), we should, as Paul admonished in Romans 6:11 (see note), consider ourselves "to be dead indeed to sin." We still have sinful tendencies within, but having died to them, sin no longer has dominion over us. We die to our selfish desires and pursuits. But believers must also think of themselves as "alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11). We should do those things that please Him. Victorious Christians are those who have died—to live! - R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) (Bolding added)

---

#### Vance Havner - CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The first discovery a Christian needs to make is that he cannot of himself live the Christian life. "Christ liveth in me. . ." (Gal. 2:20). It has been said that living the Christian life is not so much our responsibility but our response to His ability. Paul did not say, "To me to live is Christ first. . ." It was Christ-period! Christ was first, last, and everything between. Christ is not a way to live, He is our life!

---

**He Was Dead But Now Lives** - Many years ago I (Dr De Haan) was scheduled to speak at a Bible conference in Pennsylvania. A few days before it was to begin, a member of the conference committee telephoned my office. Someone in Pennsylvania had received a newspaper clipping from a Michigan paper reporting my death. The news had spread all over the area, and the conference representative wanted to verify the report so he could get another speaker in my place. The reason for all the confusion was the death of someone else with the same last name. Some people had jumped to the conclusion that the report was about me.

When I arrived at the conference, I found a very curious crowd assembled. I chose Revelation 1:18 for my text and said, *The reports you heard about my death were true. I did die, but I am now here, risen from the dead, and alive forevermore.* While Revelation 1:18 applies first of all to the death and resurrection of Jesus, it reminds me of what has happened to every member of the body of Christ. We were spiritually dead in sins (Eph. 2:1), but we were also spiritually raised (Eph 2:5). Every Christian can say, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Is this your testimony too? —M. R. De Haan, M.D. (founder of RBC Ministries)

---

#### Like The Master

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. —Galatians 2:20

A young boy knocked at the studio door of an Italian artist who had died. When it was opened, he explained, "Please, madam, will you give me the master's brush?"

The boy, who had a passionate longing to be an artist, wished for the great master's touch. The woman placed the brush in the boy's hand and invited him to try.

He made a supreme effort but soon found he could paint no better with that brush than with his own. The woman then said, "Remember, you cannot paint like the great master unless you have his spirit."

So too, people who have never been born again are doomed to disappointment and failure when they attempt to live in a way that pleases God. Without the indwelling Holy Spirit, they cannot do it.

Perhaps you have experienced the new birth and you have Christ's Spirit living within you, yet you feel so powerless. The reason may be that though you have all of His Spirit, His Spirit does not have all of you. All your ambitions and desires must be submitted to His control.

The greatness of the power and effectiveness of your service for Christ is in exact proportion to the measure of your surrender to Christ. By Henry G. Bosch [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord!  
Oh, to be lost in Thee!  
Oh, that it might be no more I,  
But Christ who lives in me!  
—Whiddington

Christ is seen most clearly when we remain in the background.

---

#### Vance Havner - By His Spirit

-We cannot of ourselves produce any of the experiences of the Christian life.

We cannot regenerate ourselves, for we are born again not of the will of the flesh but of God (John 1:13).

We cannot confess Jesus as Lord but by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3).

We cannot understand the Bible but by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27).

We cannot live the Christian life—Christ lives in us (Phil 1:21; Gal. 2:20).

The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

We can consent and cooperate, but this is a supernatural work of God from start to finish. - Vance Havner Sermon Sparklers

---

#### Vance Havner - MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

- Abide with us.... Luke 24:29.
- Christ liveth in me.... Galatians 2:20.
- I... will sup with him.... Revelation 3:20.

Sometimes when we are told in the house of a friend, "Make yourself at home," they are ill at ease and so are we and nobody is "at home." Is Jesus "at home" in your heart or are there doors locked against Him? Is He a welcome guest in your home, indeed the Host at the head of the table? Does He feel "at home" in some of our churches? He was outside the door of lukewarm Laodicea. Blessed is that heart, that home, that church, where the Saviour is not an occasional visitor for special occasions, but a welcome resident who is also President, where it truly can be said, "Jesus lives here"! - All the Days

---

#### Vance Havner - EN-CHRISTED

Christ liveth in me.... Galatians 2:20.

Strictly speaking, there is only one Christian life and that is Christ Himself, but He lives it again and again in all who receive Him. The Christian is en-Christed and what possibilities that suggests! We all have received His fullness—His wisdom, His health, His love, His power—all of these are released in us according to His Word, His will, our need, and our faith. We are still personalities, not robots, and, to the extent that we trust and obey, we may have all we need to do His will as long as He wants us to do it. Some want more than is His will and many live with far less than they might have. Make it your prayer and pursuit that Christ may live in you to the fullest extent of His purpose for you.- All the Days

---



### Vance Havner - THE MIRACLE LIFE

Christ liveth in me.... Galatians 2:20.

The Christian life is not merely a way of life, but Christ Himself living again in all who trust and obey Him. This life is miraculous in origin for it is the gift of God. It is miraculous in operation by the grace of God. It is miraculous in objective, the glory of God. There is so little of the miraculous in the Church today because most of her members are not living miracle lives. We have mostly an Old Adam Improvement Society of merely religious natural men who have never had the initial miracle of the second birth. We have developed a facsimile of the Christian experience without either the origin, operation, or objective of the original and the genuine. If we are what we have always been, we are not Christians. A Christian is a new creation.- All the Days

---

### Vance Havner - WHAT TO DO WITH YOURSELF

I am crucified with Christ.... Galatians 2:20.

The emphasis today is on self-improvement, self-realization, self-satisfaction. All sorts of courses and recipes and secrets abound on self-fulfillment. Even Christianity has become just a better way to have a good time. The Bible does not teach self-development but rather death to self. The Church is not an Old Adam Improvement Society. The only thing we should do with self is consent to its crucifixion and cooperate with God in the process. We do not crucify ourselves, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. We do not become robots. Paul said, "Nevertheless I live... yet not I...." Christ lives in us and, as we allow Him to be Himself in us, there is less of us and more of Him. We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God.- All the Days

---

### Vance Havner - BE THYSELF IN ME

Christ liveth in me.... Galatians 2:20.

The Christ-indwelt believer may well pray, "Lord Jesus, be Thyself in me, release Thy powers in my life as much as possible." He has no limitations, but we have. Our bodies and minds are restricted and we see through a glass as in a riddle. We want His fullness to the full extent of our capacity. Later, when we have new faculties in another world, we can know and enjoy His presence and power without limit, but we earthbound creatures understand only in part. How much and how fully Christ can be Himself in us at present is an interesting subject. Certain it is that we could know Him better now than we do. How much divine power is possible for these minds and bodies is not measurable except to say as much as we need for our good and His glory. But we are generally far short of the possibilities and subsist on crackers and cheese with tickets to the banquets of His grace. Pray that He may be to you all He can under present conditions! - All the Days

---

### Vance Havner - Dead and Alive Gal 2:20

Many years ago I heard a missionary relate an incident that has lingered with me to this day. He told of an African native, a Christian who had a bad temper that often got him into trouble. One day the African heard that the Christian is crucified with Christ. He resolved to make it more real by burning the mark of a cross in the palm of his right hand with a hot iron. He explained it later: "When I get angry and clench my fist, I feel the scar of that cross, and it tells me that I am crucified with my Saviour and dead to sin."

A crude way to do it but would that we might remind ourselves as effectively of Galatians 2:20! I remember hearing a beloved minister speak of his conversion, his call and crucifixion. He was sure of the first two, he said, but concerned about the third. He meant that while he accepted the fact of his identification with Christ in death and resurrection, he was not satisfied with the outworking of it in his own experience.

Many of us could join him there. We understand something of the fact that Paul declared: "I am crucified with Christ...." We do not crucify ourselves. A man may shoot himself, drown himself, poison himself but he cannot crucify himself. As with all the great experiences of the Christian life, it is the work of the Holy Spirit with our consent and cooperation. The Christian life is not a do-it-yourself job. We cannot regenerate ourselves or confess Christ as Lord or understand the Bible but by the Holy Spirit. The outworking of our crucifixion is by the "reckon," "yield" and "obey" of Romans Six.

Baptism sets forth this glorious truth, but how many church members even suspect the meaning of it? To many it is only a rite by which they "join church." Thousands have never been Scripturally baptized, they just got wet in a church baptistry. Many have never been born again, and multitudes have no concept of what it means to be buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life.

Some see only part of it. Two girls who had recently become Christians received an invitation to a dance. They wanted to be Scriptural in their refusal so, having learned something of our death to sin, replied, "We're dead and can't come!" But we are not only dead unto sin, we are alive unto God. We are meant to be more than holy corpses. Some Christians impress us with their deadness but give no sign of life.

For the Christian it is not a matter of "Dead Or Alive"; he is both dead and alive. He has died with his Saviour to sin and this world, and he has risen with Him to live, by His resurrection power, here on earth the first chapter of an endless life. Our Lord spent only a few hours on the cross but he lives forevermore. Let us not major in dying but in living, for He came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. - It is Toward Evening

---

### Vance Havner - Proper Identification

Christ liveth in me. Galatians 2:20.

We are always intrigued and haunted by the simplicity of first-century Christianity. What would happen if a man started out today to be just a Christian? The idea has inspired books like In His Steps. Well, if a man started out to be "just a Christian" he would probably gather a band of "just Christians" around him, and soon there would be another denomination! Through the centuries believers hungry to recapture the simplicity of the early faith have started out to be just friends or disciples or brethren or some other group. But one always has to watch, lest devotion to a group or movement supersede devotion to Christ Himself. In every Christian Christ lives again. Every true believer is a return to first-century Christianity. The problem is how to maintain the simplicity of being just a Christian, an en-Christed one amid the complexity of the modern religious set-up. What ought to be most evident in us is that Christ lives in us. If our church or group is more evident than our identification with Christ it is too evident. We are here to advertise Him, not "it" or "us" or "them." - Day by Day

---

### Vance Havner - Begin Today!

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. 2:20

If we must wait until we understand doctrine and have a systematic knowledge of the Bible we may never begin the adventure of faith. One of the strange turns of providence is that he frequently raises up some young and untaught herald and makes the theologians sit at his feet. Moody invaded England and Scotland and learned divines were taught of him. It is all that flesh may not be tempted to glory before him who raises up things which are not to bring to nought things that are. You can live as truly by faith today as ever you will later. You can be filled with the Spirit today as truly as anyone else. More light and experience may come but now is the time to walk by faith and you need feel no inferiority complex in the presence of theologians or let the experienced despise your youth. It is all of God and none of them has anything he did not receive. Pay them all due deference but do not postpone the life abundant until you know more or read more or experience more. Live abundantly today!

I have a life with Christ to live,  
But, ere I live it, must I wait  
Till learning can clear answer give  
To this and that book's date?"

No! Now is the accepted time! Live today! - Consider Jesus

---

### Vance Havner - The Invincible Affirmation

"... Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20

There is absolutely no way of conquering a man who believes that Christ lives in him and lives accordingly. If Christ has been received by faith, if the life has been committed utterly to him, if he is allowed to fill the person's life with his own, there is nothing that can stand against such a character, even as nothing could stand against Christ in the days of his flesh. Such a man is unconquerable because there is no way of getting at him. He isn't living by his own spirit and what can be done with a dead man? Christ is living in his stead and what can be done with Christ? He who lives by this invincible affirmation is hidden with Christ in God and is untouchable. Take his money but his treasures are laid up in heaven. Take his health but while the outer man decays, the inner man is renewed day by day. Revile his name but he lives by the name of another. You may even kill him but "to die is gain"! What can anything or anybody do with a man like that? "Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword—a formidable combination but they are helpless here! We do not merely conquer, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Why? Because with Christ God hath freely given us all things. Having "all things" in Christ makes us superior to all things. - Consider Jesus

---

### Vance Havner - "Not I, But Christ"

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20

Is it not more often "not Christ but I"? Have you ever come to where you threw down before the Lord all that you are and have and said, "There, Lord, I have failed. Only you can live the Christian life: begin now your life in me; think your thoughts, make your plans, will your will, work your work, have your way." Then, did you dare to believe that he had begun it, did you begin right there to expect him to live in you? Suppose I try to run a store. I know nothing about it, I get the books mixed up, I do not know how to buy or sell, things are in a dreadful mess. I turn the whole business over to another to own and manage and I become only a clerk in the same store I used to run. Mind you, I am as busy as ever but I have changed my responsibility. The care, the upkeep, the management, all that now is the owner's concern; my part is just to be a faithful clerk. This Christ life is simply turning the little shop of life, so woefully perplexing, over to another. Christ becomes owner, manager, overseer; his is the responsibility, the upkeep. Your part is to be a faithful clerk, steward of the grace of God. You are to trust the management to him and obey orders: take off the shelves anything displeasing, add anything he commands. But he is also your elder brother and his love takes out all the worry, fever, and tension. And one day, if you have been faithful over a few things, he will give you a heavenly shop in the city of the King! - Consider Jesus

---

## Adrian Rogers - Galatians 2:20

If you want to cross a bridge and you don't know whether it will hold you up, you might be afraid and tremble and try to make yourself believe. You might screw up your own courage and hope you have what it takes to cross it. But what if that bridge before you was made of concrete and steel, with semitrucks going over it every day? When you see that kind of bridge and understand what it can sustain, it's easy for you to cross it. When you see who God is, rather than putting your faith in positive feelings, you just put your faith in God, and your faith will grow.

---

## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose

**OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH HIS SON.** 1 John 1:3.

1. With His death, Gal. 2:20.
  2. With His life, Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:1-3.
  3. With His nature, 2 Peter 1:4.
  4. With His Name, Eph. 3:14, 15.
  5. With His service, John 17:18.
  6. With His sufferings, 1 Peter 4:13.
  7. With His glory, Rom. 8:17; John 17:24; Rev. 20:4.
- 

## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose

**WONDERS OF GRACE.** Galatians 2:20.

There are seven spiritual wonders in this marvellous text.

1. That the Son of God should love a persecutor like Saul. "Who loved me."
  2. That the Son of God should be crucified. "Crucified with Christ."
  3. That Christ should give Himself for sinners. "Who gave Himself for me."
  4. That a man should be crucified in the Christ. "I am crucified with Christ."
  5. That a crucified man should still be alive. "Nevertheless I live."
  6. That Christ, who was crucified, should be found living in a crucified man. "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."
  7. That a man can live this new life by faith on the Son of God. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."
- 

## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose

**THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF.** Gal. 2:20.

This verse has been called "The Gospel in Brief." Bengel affirmed it to be "The summit and marrow of Christianity." The Christian life is:

- I. **A Dying Life**—"I am crucified"—dying daily.
  - II. **A Living Life**—"I live."
  - III. **A Dual Life**—"I—Christ."
  - IV. **A Faith Life**—"By the Faith."
- 

## James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose

**"YET NOT I."**

In the New Testament Paul several times makes use of a corrective—"I, yet not I." Why? Was it a new Christian form of speaking he had not yet got into the habit of using? Hardly. Was it not rather a reminder to himself and others of the great change that had taken place; or better, a declaration that the "I" always remains, only by conversion with a wonderful plus—Christ. In Spiritism there is the extinction of personality—never in Christianity. Though Christ and I are separate personalities, by grace we become one, yet retaining our separate identity. The "I, yet not I":

- I. Of Living, Gal. 2:20
  - II. Of Service, 1 Cor. 15:10
  - III. Of Offence, Mark 14:29
  - IV. Of Speaking, 1 Cor. 7:10
  - V. Of Glorifying, 2 Cor. 12:5
- 

## Peter Kennedy - You Died with Christ

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."—Galatians 2:20

Robert Greene (R. G.) Lee was born in 1886 on a South Carolina farm to poor but religious parents. He sensed God's call to be a preacher early in his life and in spite of many obstacles heeded the call. He was ordained at his boyhood church in 1910 and went on to receive his Ph.D. in International Law in 1919.

Dr. Lee became a legend during sixty-plus years of ministry. He preached more than eight thousand sermons, including 1,275 presentations of his historic message, "Payday Someday." During his pastorate at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis from 1927-1960 over twenty-four thousand people joined the church. He authored more than fifty books of sermons and served several terms as president of both the Tennessee and Southern Baptist Conventions. Lee died at the age of ninety-two.

Once during a trip to Israel Dr. Lee visited the site where many believe Jesus Christ was crucified. He told his Arab guide that he wanted to walk to the top of the hill but the guide tried to discourage him. The preacher was determined to climb the hill so the guide accompanied him. When they reached the crest Dr. Lee removed his hat and bowed his head, deeply moved. The guide asked him, "Sir, have you been here before?" Dr. Lee replied, "Yes! Two thousand years ago."

Christ lives His life in us today because we died and rose with Him two thousand years ago. Today thank Jesus that His death gave you new life.

"And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood! Died He for me who caused His pain? For me who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should'st die for me?"—Charles Wesley - From Generation to Generation

---

## Robert Neighbour - The Life and Its Precedence

"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" (Gal. 2:20).

Our key verse clearly sets forth two lives: (1) My own life — "Nevertheless I live." (2) The life in Christ Jesus — "Christ liveth in me."

Our key verse places the precedence upon the life in Christ Jesus. "Yet not I, but Christ."

Let us consider two important lessons:

1. The dying of the self-life. "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31). "The Cross by the which I am crucified."

There are some passages which fit in just here.

- (1) Matthew 10:39: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

The word "life" in this passage refers to the natural man. It covers the whole existence from the cradle to the grave. It includes the daily walk, the social, mental and business life of the natural man. If any one FINDS his life — that is, if any one lives for things beneath and holds back his life from God — he shall lose it. But, if he loses this life — that is, if he yields it, crucifies it, denies it, that he may serve Christ — he will find it in the life to come.

- (2) Revelation 12:11: "And they loved not their lives unto the death." This is an example of some who lost their lives for Christ, and who will find them in the life to come.

(3) Acts 15:26: "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Another example of two men, Paul and Barnabas, who gave the new life precedence over the old and who were willing, at any moment, to lay down their earth life.

(4) Acts 20:24: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." Paul is about to enter into new scenes, knowing that nothing but bonds and afflictions await him. Yet Paul did not hesitate. He gave right value to the life in Christ Jesus, and was ready to lose the life that now is.

Some dear saints wept over Paul and besought him to shield his life from so great a conflict, but Paul said, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

2. The new life in Christ Jesus should become our chief concern. We should not only die, be crucified to the old life and its claims, but we should be alive to the new life and follow, its aspirations and demands.

Some passages again:

(1) 2 Corinthians 4:10, 11: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Paul was happy in dying to the old life. Why? In order that the Life in Christ Jesus might be manifested. What cared he for troubles and perplexities and persecutions? He knew that as he died, Christ would be made alive.

(2) John 12:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

This is the same thing, as we saw exemplified in Paul's experiences. The dying of the old life and the birth of the new life. Out of the grave where the OLD MAN died, the new man comes forth.

(3) Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

Paul counted all things but loss, he reckoned them as no more than refuge. What, all things? His own selfish life — his life in the Sanhedrin; his life with its honors and accomplishments; his life with its splendid preparation; his life with all that future application might have brought to him. He counted it all refuge. Why? He estimated the life in Christ Jesus as his goal. He sought to know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings and the conformity with His death, in order that he might be found in Him.

Moses counted all things but loss. He is a splendid Old Testament example of this same reckoning as Hebrews 11:24-26 bears witness. (Robert Neighbour - Sermons and Bible Studies)

---

#### James Smith - "NOT I, BUT CHRIST." Galatians 2:20.

**I. Think of those Two Personalities.** "I," "Christ." There is a mystery in each of them. The mystery of evil is connected with the first, and the mystery of godliness with the second. Each is the medium through which another great Personality works. "The prince of the power of the air; the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) operates in and through the one, while the Almighty Father of all manifests Himself through the other. The one is the instrument of Satan, the other is the servant of God. This unregenerate "I," in his ignorance, selfishness, pride, and unbelief, is a fit subject for the prince of darkness. The Heaven-anointed Christ, in his unselfish devotion to the will of God, is perfectly fitted for the accomplishment of His purposes.

**II. Think of their Relationship One to the Other.** What is there in common between this "I" and the "Christ?" between the servant of Satan and the servant of God? What communion hath light with darkness? What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (2 Cor. 6:14-16). Each is animated and controlled by a different and opposing spirit. The principles of the flesh and of the Spirit are contrary, the one to the other. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and belongs to the kingdom of this world; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and belongs to the Kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption (1 Cor. 16:20). Self is carnal, Christ is spiritual. "To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). This I, the natural man, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and so can have no fellowship with Christ. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

**III. Think of the Meaning of this New Relationship.** "Not I, but Christ." These words imply a putting off of the old man, and a putting on of Christ. The sinful, self-seeking "I" has surrendered and given place to the life and rule of the Holy One. It used to be, "I, not Christ," but now it is, "Not I, but Christ."

1. In the matter of SALVATION. The works of the law and of the flesh have given place to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The sandy foundation has been exchanged for the infallible Rock. His own righteousness has been cast aside for the righteousness of God. It is also, "Not I, but Christ."

2. In the matter of SANCTIFICATION. "Christ liveth in me." The usurper within has been dethroned, and the Lord of life and glory has been crowned. Holiness has come, not by working, but by admitting the Holy One and giving Him His true place in the heart as Lord. The old "I" has been crucified with Christ, and a new Spirit-formed "I" has come into being which delights to say, "Not I, but Christ."

3. In the matter of SERVICE. "To me to live is Christ." "Whose I am, and whom I serve." He seeks now not his own will but the will of Him who saved him and sent him. "If I yet pleased myself I would not be the servant of Christ." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation."

---

#### Galatians 2:20 Henry Blackaby - Experiencing God Day by Day - An Exchanged Life

. . . and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.—Galatians 2:20

The Christian life is an exchanged life. Jesus' life for your life. When Christ takes control, your life takes on dimensions you would never have known apart from Him. When you are weak, then Christ demonstrates His strength in your life (2 Cor. 12:9–10). When you face situations that are beyond your comprehension, you have only to ask, and the infinite wisdom of God is available to you (James 1:5). When you are faced with humanly impossible situations, God does the impossible (Luke 18:27). When you encounter people whom you find difficult to love, God expresses His unconditional love through you (1 John 4:7). When you are at a loss as to what you should pray for someone, the Spirit will guide you in your prayer life (Rom. 8:16). When Christ takes up residence in the life of a believer, "all the fullness of God" is available to that person (Eph. 3:19). It is marvelously freeing to know that God controls your life and knows what it can become. Rather than constantly worrying about what you will face, your great challenge is to continually release every area of your life to God's control. The temptation will be to try to do by yourself what only God can do. Our assignment is to "abide in the vine" and to allow God to do in and through us what only He can do (John 15:5). Only God can be God. Allow Him to live out His divine life through you. He is the only One who can.

---

#### THE WELL-SPENT LIFE

I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me . . . and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

A messenger came to the home of a minister of the Gospel with a request that he visit a sick lady. He said she desired to see him because she had almost reached the end of her journey. Then he added, "She is very happy in the review of a well-spent life." Of course, this caused the minister great concern, as he thought that no doubt here was a soul about to enter eternity with nothing better to rest on than the memory of her own good deeds. Arriving at the house, he questioned the dying one, "Did I understand correctly that you are very happy just reviewing a well-spent life?" She gave him a searching, yet contented glance, as she replied with a smile, "Indeed I am, but it is not MY well-spent life; it is the well-spent life of the Lord Jesus to which I had reference!" To his joy the minister found that she was resting fully upon the all-sufficient work of the Savior, and was conscious of her identification with Him. She knew that God had reckoned her as one with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, and that any goodness she had manifested in her life was the result of her union with the Living Christ.

This is the secret of the Christian experience and its undying vitality — the Lord Jesus Himself. Faced with the impossibility of performing in a way that would be acceptable to God, we must receive Him who is the Life. Having delivered us from spiritual death, He now dwells within us in the person of His Holy Spirit, giving us the continuing and "more abundant" life that He alone can provide. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

As rays of light from yonder sun,  
The flowers of earth set free,  
So life and light and love come forth  
From Christ living in me. —Whittle

Christianity is not a cloak PUT ON, but a life PUT IN!

---

#### THE "CRUCIFIED" CHRISTIAN Galatians 2:20

#### THE CROSS SPELLS "F.I.N.I.S."

I am crucified with Christ. Galatians 2:20

To participate in the life of Christ, we must first be identified with Him in His death. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). Those of us who now have eternal life have died in the person of our sinless Substitute, Jesus Christ, just as surely as if we had consciously been present at Calvary. While in principle our crucifixion is thus an accomplished fact, in daily practice it should constantly mean "death"; to the self-life!

A young man once approached an older Christian with the question, "What does it mean as far as this life is concerned to be 'crucified with Christ?'" The believer replied, "It means three things: (1) a man on a cross is facing only one direction; (2) he is not going back; and (3) he has no further plans of his own." T. S. Randall, commenting on these three things, says: "First, a crucified man is facing in only one direction. Too many Christians are trying to face in two directions at the same time. They are divided in heart. They want Heaven, but they also are in love with the world. They are like Lot's wife; they are running one way,

but are facing another. Second, a crucified man is not coming back. The cross spells finis for him; he is not going to return to his old life. Third, a crucified man has no plans of his own. He is finished with the vainglory of this life. Its chains are all broken, and its charms are all gone." In the light of these three truths, would you say that you are truly "crucified"? - H. G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If I would crucify the flesh, that Christ in me might reign,  
I must not spare my shrinking flesh, the crucifixion pain;  
'Tis either Christ or selfish I — what shall the answer be?  
Let self be crucified that Christ, alone, might live in me!  
—Reich

When men come to die with Christ on the cross, He comes to live in them by His Spirit!—MacGregor

---

#### Galatians 2:20 DYING TO LIVE

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. (Galatians 2:20)

In her book "It Only Hurts When I Laugh", Ethel Barrett tells how outstanding servants of God died to self and sin. George Mueller, when questioned about his spiritual power, responded simply,

"One day George Mueller died."

D. L. Moody was visiting New York City when he consciously died to his own ambitions.

And evangelist Christmas Evans, putting down on paper his surrender to Christ, began it by writing:

"I give my soul and body to Jesus."

It was, in a very real sense, a death to self.

John Gregory Mantle wrote,

"There is a great difference between realizing, 'On that Cross He was crucified for me,' and 'On that Cross I am crucified with Him.' The one aspect brings us deliverance from sin's condemnation, the other from sin's power."

Recognizing that we "have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), we should, as Paul admonished in Romans 6:11, consider ourselves "to be dead indeed to sin."

We still have sinful tendencies within, but having died to them, sin no longer has dominion over us. We die to our selfish desires and pursuits. But believers must also think of themselves as "alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:11 - see exposition of Romans 6:11). We should do those things that please Him. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Victorious Christians are those who have died—to live! - R. W. De Haan.

---

#### Galatians 2:20 F B Meyer Our Daily Walk CHRISTIAN LIVING

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal 2:20.

THE HEART of true religion is to believe that Christ is literally within us. We must not simply look to Him as our Mediator, Advocate, and Example, but as being possessed by Him. He is our Life, the living Fountain rising up in the well of our personality. The Apostle Paul was never weary of re-affirming this great fact of his experience, and it would be well if each of us could say every day, before starting forth on our daily duty: "Christ is in me; let me make room for Him to dwell."

We must say No to self, that the life of Christ may become manifest in and through us, and our standing become a reality in daily experience and conduct. When evil suggestions come to us, we must remember that we have entered a world where such things have no place. We are no longer in the realm of the god of this world, but have passed into the realm of the Risen Christ. Let those who are tempted believe this, and assert it in the face of the tempter, counting upon the Holy Spirit to make their reckoning a living experience.

In Eph 6:13-17 is described the armour of the Christian soul; in Col 3:12-14 the habit or dress which he wears beneath his coat of mail. We must be careful to be properly dressed each day. If we lose our temper over trifles, or yield to uncharitable speech, it shows that we have omitted to put on the girdle of love; if we yield to pride, avarice, envy and jealousy, we must not simply endeavour to put off these evils, but take from the wardrobe the opposite graces. It is not enough to avoid doing wrong. Our Master demands that we should always do and be what is right. When we fail in some sudden demand, it is because we have omitted to put on some trait of Christ, which was intended to be the complement of our need. Let us therefore day by day say: "Lord Jesus, wrap Thyself around me, that I may go forth, adequately attired to meet life's demands." In Christ for standing; Christ in us, for life; we with him, for safety.

---

#### Galatians 2:20-21 TODAY IN THE WORD

A strip of zinc and a strip of copper are suspended in a salt solution. Although the zinc and copper atoms are losing and gaining electrons, both strips maintain an equilibrium. Then the two are connected with an electrical conductor. Electrons are forced through it from the zinc strip to the copper strip. As long as the conductor is present, a chemical reaction keeps the electrons flowing. Sound impressive? That describes one of the most common power sources in the world—an ordinary battery.

Paul might have asked in today's reading: What are the ""batteries"" for Christian living? Is there power in keeping a set of rules? Or does it flow from our being crucified with Christ?

Verse 20 makes it abundantly clear that Christianity is not a matter of legalism--of carefully checking off a list of dos and don'ts. Neither is it a human effort to bring off a superior kind of morality, but divine life surging through the individual.

This reliance on God as our ""power source"" follows from verse 19. Paul died to the law because he had been crucified with Christ; he lived to God because Christ lived in him.

""I live."" But in a sense it is not ""I"" who live, not ""I"" in my own strength who achieves. Instead, ""Christ lives in me."" Incredible! What a powerful cure for discouragement, frustration and weakness! And what a warning against returning to law (Gal. 4:9).

Instead, says Paul, I live the Christian life by faith. At the end of the verse comes a final reminder that the sacrifice of Christ is ultimately responsible for all that Christians are and all the blessings we enjoy.

#### APPLY THE WORD

As you may have already discovered, we at Today in the Word recommend Scripture memorization as an excellent spiritual discipline (Psalm 119:11). If you haven't already memorized Galatians 2:20, these classic words would make an outstanding recharge for your ""spiritual batteries.""

---

#### Galatians 2:21 G Campbell Morgan Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible

If righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought.--Gal. 2:21

Dr. Rendel Harris has aptly described this letter of the great Apostle to the Gentiles as an "explosive epistle." Its force lies more in the truths it declares than in the way in which they were stated; yet the method of statement is most arresting. Perhaps in the course of the whole argument, nothing is more tremendous in the impact upon the mind than this superlative declaration. If the Law, which does reveal righteousness, is able to produce righteousness, then the death of Christ was a mistake; it was unnecessary; He died to accomplish something which might have been accomplished in some other way. Those then who hold that a man may reach righteousness through the Law are compelled either to get rid of the whole conception of the atoning death of the Lord, or to say that God was mistaken. Moreover, if the Law could not make righteous, and the death of Christ is able to do so, then why super-impose upon faith in that which is able, the rites and ceremonies of that which is without force? That is the whole case of the letter; and it is that truth, so force-fully stated, which has made this letter the high explosive which more than once in the history of the Church has shattered false doctrine as to the way of salvation. It was Martin Luther's weapon. Because the heart of man is ever prone to add something of human device to the Divine provision, it is well to keep this writing at hand, for its power is as great as ever.

## ADDITIONAL NOTE ON VERSES 14–21

The course of thought in Paul's address to Peter is difficult to follow. It will help to simplify it if the reader will keep it before him that the whole passage is to be interpreted in the light of Peter's false attitude—as a remonstrance against a particular state of things. The line of remonstrance is as follows.

If you, Peter, being a Jew, do not live as a Jew, but as a Gentile, as you did when you ate with Gentiles, why do you, by your example in withdrawing from Gentile tables, constrain Gentile Christians to live as Jews, observing the separative ordinances of the Jewish law? This course is plainly inconsistent.

Even you and I, born Jews, and not Gentiles—sinners—denied the obligation of these ordinances by the act of believing on Jesus Christ. In professing this faith we committed ourselves to the principle that no one can be justified by the works of the law.

But it may be said that we were in no better case by thus abandoning the law and legal righteousness, since, in the very effort to be justified through Christ, we were shown to be sinners, and therefore in the same category with the Gentiles. Does it not then follow that Christ is proved to be a minister of sin in requiring us to abandon the law as a means of justification?

No. God forbid. It is true that, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we stood revealed as sinners, for it was Christ who showed us that we could not be justified by the works of the law; that all our legal strictness only left us sinners. But the inference is false that Christ is thereby shown to be a minister of sin.

For to say that Christ is a minister of sin, is to say that I, at his bidding, became a transgressor by abandoning the law, and that the law is the only true standard and medium of righteousness. If I reassert the obligation of the law after denying that obligation, I thereby assert that I transgressed in abandoning it, and that Christ, who prompted and demanded this transgression, is a minister of sin.

But this I deny. The law is not the true standard and medium of righteousness. I did not transgress in abandoning it. Christ is not a minister of sin. For it was the law itself which compelled me to abandon the law. The law crucified Christ and thereby declared him accursed. In virtue of my moral fellowship with Christ, I was (ethically) crucified with him. The law declared me also accursed, and would have no more of me. The act of the law forced me to break with the law. Through the law I died to the law. Thus I came under a new principle of life. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. If I should declare that righteousness is through the law, by reasserting the obligation of the law as you, Peter, have done, I should annul the grace of God as exhibited in the death of Christ; for in that case, Christ's death would be superfluous and useless. But I do not annul the grace of God.

## WORD STUDY ANABAINO

**NIDNTT on anabaino** - The compound anabainō indicates movement towards a destination: to go up, mount up, ascend, grow up. The spatial meaning predominates; one climbs a mountain, mounts a platform, goes upstairs. If the destination is a holy place, the going up involves performance of some cultic act. A man goes up to the temple (situated on a higher level) to pray; the mystic is promised ascent to the world of the gods, heaven or Olympus (Mithraic Liturgy 10, 22). OT In the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) anabainō most frequently renders 'ālāh (go up, ascend, climb) and is used particularly of going up to the mountain of God, the sanctuary and Jerusalem (Ex. 34:4; 1 Sa 1:3; 2 Ki. 19:14). In Ge 28:12 Jacob's dream pictured a "ladder", or more precisely a ramp or stair-like pavement, which, in accordance with the ancient concept of the world, led up to the gate of heaven. This was the place where intercourse between the earth and the upper divine world took place. God's messengers were going up and down, "fulfilling divine commands or supervising the earth" (G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 1961, 279; → Babylon). In Jonah 2:7 descent into the underworld signifies condemnation and death, and ascent signifies pardon and life. (See [The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#) online)

**TDNT on anabaino** - (1) The primary sense is spatial, "to rise up," e.g., to mount a horse or ship, or to climb a hill, or move from the coast inland, or go to an upper story, or to mount a rostrum, or to rise to address the court....(2) More important in the NT is the cultic use (based on the OT and LXX). Jesus' going up from baptism acquires significance through the descent of the Spirit (Mt. 3:16). Going up to the sanctuary or Jerusalem is a stock phrase (Lk. 18:10; Jn. 2:13; 5:1; 7:8, 10, 14; 12:20). For Paul this means not only going to a place but to the mother community (cf. Acts 18:22). Actual ascent is indicated (since the holy city is on a hill) but going to worship is implied, as also in pagan usage due to the common situation of shrines on eminences. (3) The culminating religious use of the term is for ascent to heaven.

**Friberg on anabaino** - (1) literally, of upward movement go or come up, ascend, especially of the road to Jerusalem, located on mountainous terrain (Mt 20:17); with the translation suited to the context: of a ship embark, climb aboard (Mt 14:32); of plants grow, spring up (Mt 13:7); of a mountain climb, ascend (Mt 5:1); of smoke rise, mount upward (Rev 8:4); (2) figuratively, of thoughts arise, enter the mind (Lk 24:38); of information reach, come to (Acts 21:31); idiomatically *ὑποβιβέναι τὸ καρδίαν* literally *arise in the heart*, i.e. begin to think (1 Co 2:9) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

The **first use of anabaino** describes Jesus coming up out of the water after baptism (Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10) and later Jesus "went up to the mountain" (Mt 5:1) in preparation for one of the greatest sermons in history (Sermon on the Mount). In Mt 14:23 Jesus again "went up on the mountain" but this time to pray to His Father and in Mk 3:13 Jesus "went up on the mountain" and named His 12 disciples. In Lk 9:28 Jesus took Peter and John with Him as He went up to the mountain to pray at which time He was transfigured (Lk 9:29). Anabaino describes thorns coming up and choking out good seed (Mt 13:7, Mk 4:7), a good crop which "grew up" (Mk 4:8), a mustard seed that "grows up" (Mk 4:32), a hooked fish coming up out of the water (Mt 17:27), Zaccheus climbing up a tree to see Jesus (Lk 19:4), of the disciples when they "went up to the upper room" (Acts 1:13), of going up to the temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1), of the Ethiopian eunuch coming up to Philip's chariot (Acts 8:31) and then coming up from waters of baptism (Acts 8:39), of prayers ascending before God (Acts 10:4, cp Rev 8:4, contrast smoke ascending out of the pit in Rev 9:2, cp "smoke of their [Beast worshipers] torment" going up forever in Rev 14:11, cp smoke of the destroyed great harlot rising up in Rev 19:3), of Peter going up on the housetop to pray (Acts 10:9), of Paul going up to greet the church (Acts 18:22), of Paul going back up to the second floor after saving Eutychus (Acts 20:11).

Anabaino describes (as also used in the present passage Gal 2:1, 2:2) Jesus' ascent (going up) to Jerusalem which is about 2400 to 2500 feet above sea level ([click schematic](#)) (Mt 20:17, 18, Mk 10:32, 33, cp Lk 2:4 of Joseph, Lk 2:42 of the 12 yo Jesus going to Jerusalem, cp Lk 18:31, 19:28, John 2:13, 5:1 - both of Jesus going up to a feast in Jerusalem, cp Jn 11:55, 12:20, of Peter in Acts 11:2, Paul and Barnabas going up to Jerusalem in Acts 15:2, cp Acts 21:12, 24:11, 25:1, 9). In Mk 6:51 Jesus went up to His disciples in the storm tossed boat (Mk 6:51). In John 1:51 anabaino describes the "angels of God ascending" on the Son of Man, in Jn 3:13 it refers to ascending to heaven (cp Acts 2:34, Ro 10:6) and in Jn 20:17 of Jesus' approaching ascent to His Father (cp His ascent in Eph 4:8, 9, 10). Rev 11:7 describes the Beast (antichrist) coming up out of the abyss (? his "resurrection" from the dead) and Rev 11:12 the invitation to the 2 witnesses to come up into heaven. Rev 13:1 metaphorically describes the Beast coming up out of the sea, in Rev 17:8 of the Beast coming up out of the abyss and Rev 13:11 of the false prophet coming out of the earth. Finally in Rev 20:9 anabaino describes the devil and his innumerable rebels coming up on the broad plain to surround Jerusalem.

Anabaino is used figuratively in Acts 7:23 to describe a thought that entered into the heart of Moses, in Acts 21:31 describes a report coming up the Roman commander (Acts 21:31) and in 1 Cor 2:9 of thoughts (not) entering the heart of man.

**Anabaino** - 82x in 78v - arise(1), ascend(2), ascended(7), ascending(3), came(7), climbed(1), climbs(1), come(4), comes(2), coming(3), entered(2), go(6), goes(1), going(6), gone(3), got(2), grew(1), grows(1), rises(1), started on our way up(1), went(25).

Matt. 3:16; 5:1; 13:7; 14:23, 32; 15:29; 17:27; 20:17; Mk. 1:10; 3:13; 4:7f, 32; 6:51; 10:32f; 15:8; Lk. 2:4, 42; 5:19; 9:28; 18:10, 31; 19:4, 28; 24:38; Jn. 1:51; 2:13; 3:13; 5:1; 6:62; 7:8, 10, 14; 10:1; 11:55; 12:20; 20:17; 21:11; Acts 1:13; 2:34; 3:1; 7:23; 8:31, 39; 10:4, 9; 11:2; 15:2; 18:22; 20:11; 21:6, 12, 15, 31; 24:11; 25:1, 9; Rom. 10:6; 1 Co. 2:9; Gal. 2:1f; Eph. 4:8ff; Rev. 4:1; 7:2; 8:4; 9:2; 11:7, 12; 13:1, 11; 14:11; 17:8; 19:3; 20:9

**Anabaino** is used 519 verses in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Because of the frequency only the uses in the Pentateuch are listed

Gen. 2:6; 13:1; 17:22; 19:28, 30; 24:16; 26:23; 28:12; 31:10, 12; 32:26; 35:1, 3, 13; 38:12f; 41:2f, 5, 18f, 22, 27; 44:17, 24, 33f; 45:9, 25; 46:29, 31; 49:4, 9; 50:5ff; Ex. 2:23; 8:3f; 10:12; 13:18; 16:13; 17:10; 19:3, 12f, 18, 20, 24; 20:26; 24:1, 9, 12f, 15, 18; 32:30; 33:1; 34:1ff, 24; 40:36f; Lev. 25:5, 11; Num. 9:17, 21; 10:11; 13:17, 21f, 30f; 14:40, 42, 44; 16:12, 14; 21:33; 27:12; 32:9, 11; 33:38; Deut. 1:21f, 24, 26, 28, 41ff; 3:1, 27; 5:9; 9:9, 23; 10:1, 3; 17:8; 25:7; 28:43; 29:23; 30:12; 32:49f; 34:1;