

Galatians Argument – Lesson 2 – Chapters 1 and 2

Last week, we went over some of the background that is helpful for us to understand what was going on in the Galatian churches – we briefly reviewed Paul’s life, which will come up again tonight in the passages we are going to cover. We talked about the gospel Paul proclaimed in Galatia: That Israel rejected God’s Savior and crucified Jesus Christ in fulfillment of prophecy; that God raised Christ from the dead, in fulfillment of prophecy and His promise; that justification is available to men through Christ; that freedom is only available through Christ by faith, not works. We talked about the Galatian response to the gospel – Paul and Barnabas would start with the synagogues – with the Jews and Gentile proselytes – some of whom would believe, and others would reject them – particularly the Jewish leadership. Paul and Barnabas would get kicked out of the synagogue and go to the Gentiles with the gospel – many of whom would receive it with joy. The Jewish leaders would oppose them and incite persecution against them and drive them out of the city. After Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their journey to Galatia, Judaizers moved into the Galatian churches and began to teach a false gospel. To persuade the Galatians, they attacked Paul’s apostolic authority, as well as the gospel, itself. Tonight we will cover Chapters 1 and 2, which is mainly Paul’s defense of his apostolic authority.

For purposes of this study I’m going to divide the book into 3 parts – pretty simple because they follow a logical flow:

- Salutation and Paul’s Defense of His Apostolic Authority (Chapters 1 and 2)
- Paul’s Defense of The True Gospel (Chapters 3 and 4)
- How Shall We Then Live? (Chapters 5 and 6)

As we talked about last week, Paul first had to defend himself against the claims of the Judaizers in order to establish his authority and the authority of the true gospel. Once he proves his authority, it will explain the true gospel and totally destroy the idea that a man can make himself righteous – justification or sanctification - by works. This leads to a question – if we can’t make ourselves righteous by works, how are we supposed to live? That’s the 3rd part of the book.

Before we get into the meat of Paul’s defense, let’s turn to **Galatians 1:1** and we will read through to **Galatians 1:5**:

[Slide 2] *“Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,⁵ to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.”*

Right off the bat, this introduction tells us quite a bit about the rest of the book. Look at verse 1 and the first part of verse 2 - “*Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),² and all the brethren who are with me.*” What do you see Paul doing there? – Defending his apostolic authority. He says he is an apostle (remember, an apostle is a basically a person who has been commissioned by another person to accomplish some purpose. When an apostle acts in the name of the person who sent him, it’s like the act of the person who sent him. In other words, when Paul speaks or acts as an apostle of Christ, it’s Christ doing the speaking and acting.) And look how he says he was appointed – men had nothing to do with it, he was appointed directly – no human intervention was involved. Who directly appointed him? Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. Those are some credentials – you don’t get any better credentials than that. Paul has authority because he was directly appointed an apostle by Jesus Christ and God the Father. We will expand on that later.

Next, he mentions that the letter is not only from he, Paul, but also from “*all the brethren who are with me.*” Why do you think he adds this? It’s not just words. He is saying – look, it’s not just me telling you this, but everyone with me agrees with what I am going to tell you in this letter. They know who I am, they accept me as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and they are all in agreement with what I am about to say. Once again, it is calculated to support his authority.

Next he refers to “*.... Grace and Peace from*” – from who? God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ – this is kind of a standard salutation; however, if you think about it – what is going on in Galatia – they are being disturbed by these Judaizers and their false gospel – they are also under persecution – they certainly don’t have a lot of peace. They really need some peace and it is available from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ *who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,* ⁵ *to whom be the glory forevermore.*” What’s he doing here? In very general terms, he’s introducing the gospel – the good news– which he is going to get into later - the emphasis being that it is God who is doing it all for us – we do nothing – Christ gave Himself for our sins, so that He might rescue us from this present evil age. Nothing we can do to rescue ourselves. And it was all in accordance with the will of God the Father. It’s all to God’s glory, men and their works have nothing to do with it.

Now that Paul has, in the introduction, set up his argument for his authority and the truth of the gospel, he skips any other niceties and moves straight in on the Galatians and the Judaizers. This is abrupt and gets straight to the point. Starting with **Gal 1:6 [Slide]**:

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be ^baccursed! ⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be ^caccursed!.”

I don't know about you, but this would get my attention. Last week we talked about how Paul felt about these Galatian churches – he called them his “children”. He is treating them like a parent would treat a child that is in imminent danger. This is urgent and the risk is great and real. So – no messing around and no mincing of words.

Look at how he describes what they are doing – by following the false gospel, the Galatians are doing nothing less than deserting God. “Deserting” is μετατίθημι in Greek which pictures a change of allegiance. The Galatians are deserting God, they are switching sides, they are changing their allegiance from Him to something else. This is a serious matter – contrary to what they may think they are doing or what their desire may be by following the false gospel – even if they are sincere and really do want to please God, they are in fact deserting God. The very God who called them by the grace of Christ. They are turning their backs on that very grace. Rejecting God's grace. It's hard for me to convey this strongly enough. By following this false gospel, this gospel of works, they are deserting the God of the Universe, and Christ, who gave Himself for them. That is just as true today – if we choose to follow a false gospel, we are in fact deserting God. He will never desert us, but we can certainly desert Him. We don't lose our salvation, but – if you are a believer and you have deserted God - that's not a place you want to be.

Notice how the Judaizers are characterized – they want to distort the gospel of Christ. It is not inadvertent. Their desire is to distort the gospel. Once again, they may have been sincerely thinking they were pleasing God, but that doesn't matter. They weren't. And look at what Paul says about that.

He tells us that the false gospel the Judaizers are preaching and the Galatians are deserting God for is not another gospel of the same kind, but a whole different animal. It is constitutionally, fundamentally different. It is not the gospel and it's not even anything like it. The gospel is supposed to be “good news”, but in fact, when we get into it, we will see the Judaizer's gospel is not any sort of “good news” at all – it's very, very bad news.

And that's why Paul, in vs 8 pronounces a curse on anyone preaching a gospel contrary to what Paul taught – “we” meaning Paul and the rest of the brethren, or even an angel from heaven – anyone preaching a different gospel is to be cursed. And then to make sure they don't misunderstand, he says it again in verse 9 – “*if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be 'accursed!*” Ok. He's said the same thing twice back to back. That's pretty clear – he really intended to say what he said and there is no mistaking what he said. That's how important getting the gospel correct is and that's how bad it is to preach a different gospel. Think of how serious this was then and think of how serious this is even now. The gospel hasn't changed. So, any person proclaiming the gospel had better make sure that he doesn't proclaim something different than what Paul proclaimed. If he does – let him be accursed. That is a scary proposition for all of us. How do you make sure? You study the Word to make sure you get it right. You don't take liberties and you don't let your own theological ideas of what should or shouldn't be influence what the Word says. That's one reason why a book like Galatians is so important. Paul was dealing with a faith gospel v. a false gospel of works, and he explains some things about both to help us understand why the false gospel of works is so bad and why it really is not “another gospel”. The Galatians were being persuaded because they didn't understand, and Paul had to write this to help them understand. This is

invaluable for us, because we come up against legalistic false gospels all the time. Galatians equips us to defend against them correctly.

Ok, back to the passage. In vs 10, Paul briefly addresses some of the criticisms the Judaizers were pointing at him in order to erode the gospel. Vs. 10 says *“For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”*

First, they accused Paul of trying to persuade men and God that salvation is by faith and not works – the verb *πειθω* is translated here “seeking the favor of” but it’s more like “persuade or convince”. The idea is that he is using fancy rhetoric to persuade men and some sort of magical influence to try to persuade God. Second, they accused Paul of being a “man pleaser”, that his gospel was an attempt to please and gain approbation from other men. They accused Paul of doing this out of what Jeremy called “approbation lust” – a desire to please men. Paul points out that, look – does anything I just said sound like I am trying to persuade anyone with fancy rhetoric or magic? Does anything I just said sound like I am trying to garner the approbation of men? No. And then he points out that, if he was still trying to please men, he would not be a slave of Christ. You can’t do both. So, I’m a slave of Christ and my whole desire is to please Him, not men. That’s where Paul is coming from.

Then he explains that further in vss. 11-12: **[Slide]** *“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.¹ Stop here a minute because these two verses are very important and they go to the heart of Paul’s arguments defending both his authority and the truth of his gospel. First, he characterizes the gospel as “not according to man”. It does not comport with man’s standards or man’s way of thinking. Then he explains that this is true because of its source – it didn’t come from man, its source was divine – it came directly from Christ. If it came from man, it would be worldly and consistent with the world’s way of thinking. But if it came from Jesus Christ, it would be divine and absolutely true. So, Paul is saying, the gospel I am preaching is not according to man it is according to God, because I didn’t get it from man, I got it directly from Christ.*

This goes to both the truth of the gospel and Paul’s authority as an apostle. The idea is this, this source of the gospel is Christ – Paul received directly from Christ. It is true because it is from Christ. And this also supports Paul’s authority as an apostle – Christ gave it by revelation to him directly – no human intermediaries – Christ didn’t give it to another apostle who taught it to Paul. Christ gave it to Paul directly. This was part of his commission as an apostle. The picture you get is Paul is commissioned as an apostle and Christ gave him the gospel by revelation as part of that commission.

The Galatians know the implication of this - since he was an apostle appointed directly by Christ, he is not accountable to any man for his ministry. Christ appointed him, commissioned him for his ministry, and gave him the gospel. No man had anything to do with this, so no man has any

¹ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Ga 1:11–12.

authority over Paul with respect to his ministry. Paul as an apostle of Christ, answers to Christ and Christ alone.

Starting with vs 13, Paul reviews the events of his life that support his claim that his gospel did not come from man. Before we move into these autobiographical passages, I want to point out something. The whole reason the Judaizers are attacking Paul is because they don't like the true gospel. If Paul was preaching something they liked, you can bet that they wouldn't be attacking him. But since they don't like the true gospel, they want to destroy it, and in their mind, the way to destroy it is to destroy Paul. So, Paul must defend himself in order to defend the gospel. But Paul's concern is not for himself. Paul's whole concern is for the gospel, he is not in any way, shape or form reciting his life history in order to exalt or glorify himself. The only reason he is doing this is to defend the true gospel. It's all about the gospel.

So, let's look at how Paul defends his claim that he did not receive the gospel from men. In vs 13, Paul begins with his "former" life in Judaism – which we talked about some last week – He summarizes it in 2 verses – vss 13-14: **[Slide]** *“For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”*

We talked about this last week. He was completely sold out to Judaism – he persecuted the church “beyond measure” and was destroying it, he was a rising star moving up fast because he was “more extremely zealous” for his ancestral traditions. Notice that he said “ancestral traditions” and not the Law. He was zealous for all the traditions that had been built up around the Law. Traditions that Christ had condemned. Paul's point is this – there is no way that I received the gospel I preach at any time or from anyone in this system – I was completely hardened to it - I hated it - I loved all the legalistic traditions and persecuted the church. I sure didn't receive the gospel there.

He then refers to his conversion on his way to Damascus – vss 15-17: **[Slide]** *“But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with ^cflesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus”* This is Paul's evaluation, as an apostle and a prophet, of what happened. God had “set [him] apart from his mother's womb” (language used to describe the appointment of OT prophets) – he was chosen for a specific divine purpose before he was even born – when it was time, God called him through God's grace (nothing Paul did, obviously; Paul was actively persecuting Christ, he deserved condemnation and judgment not grace), when God called He “revealed His Son in me” – meaning, through God's work in him, Paul realized the truth about Christ, who He was, and what He had done. And this was all for a purpose – Paul was set apart and called so that Paul would preach Christ among the Gentiles. Paul is referring to his commissioning as an apostle. The emphasis in these two verses really isn't so much on what God had done in Paul, but that it was done according to God's good pleasure. Meaning that God did it because it pleased God to do it. It's His plan, His purpose, and His timing in history. And His choice who He will use.

As important a point as that is, the thrust of these verses isn't the fact that God called him and commissioned him (although I'm sure it's there to support his argument). Paul's main point is that, when God called him, he didn't consult with any human being - not even the other apostles

in Jerusalem. He didn't go there. Instead, he went off into the Arabian desert, and then he returned to Damascus. So, he did not get his gospel from men during this period of time. God called him, and Paul went into seclusion in the desert. Paul was being prepared by God for his ministry – probably having his head retooled – learning and re-learning all he knew from Scripture in light of the truth he now knew about Christ.

In the next verses – vs 18-24 – Paul refers to the first time he went to Jerusalem: **[Slide]** “*Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.* ¹⁹ *But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.* ²⁰ *(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)* ²¹ *Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.* ²² *I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ;* ²³ *but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.”* ²⁴ *And they were glorifying God because of me.”*

Paul's point here is that, the first time he went to Jerusalem was 3 years after his conversion. He had been in Damascus and Arabia and back to Damascus and the first time he went to Jerusalem was 3 years after his conversion. He only stayed 15 days – not long enough to really learn the gospel from the apostles there. In fact, the only apostles he saw during this trip was Peter and James the brother of Jesus. This is so important to Paul, that he feels the need to emphatically assure the Galatians that this is the absolute truth.

He was only there 15 days and then he left (actually had to run for his life) to go to Syria and Cilicia (Paul's hometown Tarsus was in Cilicia).

He makes another point – that the churches in Judea, the ones closest to Jerusalem, who he had been persecuting, didn't know him by sight. But they had heard that God had turned him around and was now using him to proclaim the gospel. They were glorifying God because of what God had done with Paul. They didn't contribute anything to his gospel, either. They hadn't met him and didn't know him.

It also strikes me in these verses how he points out how independent he was from Jerusalem and Judea. He didn't go to Jerusalem until three years after his conversion and even then, he didn't stay very long – 15 days – and he only met Peter and James and the churches in Judea didn't know him by sight. There's an emphasis on his independence from Jerusalem and the apostles, in order to bolster his point.

Paul's next trip to Jerusalem is 14 years after his conversion (an 11 year interval after his first trip). Before we proceed, let me ask you – my Bible has a heading at the beginning of Chapter 2, does yours? What does it say? Mine says “The Jerusalem Council”. The event we are about to review is not the Jerusalem Council. Galatians was written before the Jerusalem Council. This event in Chapter 2 is the famine relief trip Paul and Barnabas made to Jerusalem recounted in Acts, Chapter 11. So, don't let the heading throw you off. It's not inspired, so don't worry about it. Sometimes they help, sometimes they don't. This one doesn't help and you should ignore it. It's not right.

This trip to Jerusalem is a longer account, because things happen on this trip that are very important to the issues the Galatians are facing. There is a bit of a change here – not only is this account going to support Paul's claim to apostolic authority, but it will also directly support the

true gospel – the result of this trip will be an endorsement of the true gospel by Peter, James and John. They are all preaching the same gospel. The whole account is covered by Gal 2:1-10. But let's start with vs 1-3: **[Slide]** *“Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 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. ³ But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.”*

So, 14 years after his conversion, Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem, and they took Titus, a Gentile, along with them. Paul says it was “because of a revelation” that they went – making it clear that they didn't go for the purpose of submitting the gospel to the leaders of the Jerusalem church. Note that Paul didn't explain what the “revelation” was – so it must not have been important to his point – the point is that they didn't go for the purpose of getting approval for the gospel. They simply went because of the “revelation”. (Now, we know from Acts 9, that this revelation was the prophesy of Agabus, who had come to Antioch from Jerusalem and prophesied of great famine to occur. The Antioch church took up a collection and the purpose of the trip to Jerusalem was to take the collection to the elders.)

But, since they were in Jerusalem, they took the opportunity to “submit” the gospel they proclaimed in private to “those who were of reputation” in the church – this would have been the “pillars of the church” mentioned in vs 9 – James, Peter and John. This was a private meeting, the purpose of which was not to get the other apostles approval, but to make sure they were all preaching the same gospel. They submitted it because they were afraid that if the Jerusalem church was preaching something different among the Jews then Paul and Barnabas were preaching among the Gentiles, the church would be split – the Jerusalem gospel of the Judaizers requiring circumcision and the Mosaic Law would undercut the gospel of liberty Paul and Barnabas were preaching to the Gentiles. The church – the Body of Christ - would be split, Jews and Gentiles would not be unified. Gentiles who heard Paul would know they could fellowship with Jews, but the Jews who listened to the gospel of the Judaizers would not return the fellowship. That's what Paul meant by “running in vain”. This was a private meeting with James, Peter and John and it turned out well – they were preaching the same gospel. This was also demonstrated by the fact that they did not take the position that Titus, a Gentile believer, had to be circumcised.

However, also while they were in Jerusalem, they did encounter some others – Judaizers – vs 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. 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.”*

This is Paul's evaluation of the Judaizing opposition in Jerusalem. They were ψευδαδελφοις - “false brethren” - secretly smuggled into the Jerusalem community of believers – who had slipped in to investigate the liberty a Christian has in Christ – and they had treacherous motives – they wanted to bring them back into bondage. The gist is that this was a conspiracy – certainly Satanic – a conspiracy to infiltrate the ranks of the church and sabotage it – bring believers back into bondage under the Law. They were apparently applying pressure on Paul and Barnabas because of their fellowship with Titus, the Gentile. They were probably pressuring them not to associate with him, because Paul says they didn't yield to this “for even an hour”. Which sounds like they were being pressured to do something that wasn't as permanent as circumcision – they

didn't give in and withdraw from fellowship with Titus the Gentile for even an hour. The reason – so the gospel would remain with “you” – the Galatians. Apparently, to give in for even an hour would have compromised the gospel. The Judaizers could have used this behavior to undermine the gospel – they could say “look, not even Paul and Barnabas associate with Gentiles”. They would have made sure that the word got out – Paul and Barnabas say one thing, but look how they act – see, we are right, Paul and Barnabas are still following the Law. They don't associate with Gentiles. We are all still under the Law, salvation is through Judaism, and you Gentiles must be circumcised. But Paul and Barnabas didn't yield – not even for an hour.

Paul emphasizes three things about his private meeting with Peter, James and John – first, they did not contribute anything to the gospel Paul proclaimed among the Gentiles – confirming that he didn't receive the gospel from them – vs 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.”* Second, not only did the “pillars of the church” not change or add anything to the gospel, they even explicitly recognized his apostolic authority and his ministry to the Gentiles. They recognized that he was on a par with them, particularly Peter. Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was the flip side of Peter's ministry to the Jews. And they were all preaching the same gospel. The only difference was that Paul's sphere of ministry was to the Gentiles and Peter's was to the Jews – verse 7: *“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 ⁸ (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles)”*. Third, he makes it clear that they supported him one hundred percent in his ministry – not that he needed their approval, but he had it anyway – verse 9: *“⁹ and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, ^bJames 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. ¹⁰ They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.”*

With this account of his second trip to Jerusalem, Paul has confirmed that the apostolic leadership of the Jerusalem church, the unquestioned authorities that everyone recognized as such, the “pillars of the church”, gave Paul their full, unqualified endorsement – they recognized his apostolic authority, they endorsed the gospel as the same gospel they preach among the Jews, and they endorsed his ministry to the Gentiles. They were all on the same page - working together, not against each other.

At this point, Paul has almost completed his defense of his apostolic authority and the fact that he received the gospel directly from Christ and not from any man. Now, he will finish the defense with his account of Peter's behavior in Antioch. This account is going to bridge the gap between Paul's defense of his authority and Paul's defense of the true gospel. Let's go through what happened. Look at verses 11-13: **[Slide]** *“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For prior to the coming of certain men from ^aJames, 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. ¹³ The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.* Remember that Paul is reciting these events of his history in chronological order. So, Peter's visit to Antioch – Paul and Barnabas' home church – is after Paul's visit to Jerusalem. This is after they have all endorsed the same gospel of liberty. After Peter himself had given Paul and Barnabas the “right hand of

fellowship”. Basically, after Peter had assured Paul that they were all on board with the gospel and the Gentiles.

So, when Peter comes to Antioch, his behavior shows what he knows the true gospel to be – he eats with the Gentiles. He’s not worried about the Law. It doesn’t bother him that they are Gentiles. We, don’t know how long he was there before the “party of the circumcision” – the Judaizers – arrived, but his life demonstrated the true gospel before they got there. Everything is fine.

But when the Judaizers arrive, Peter changes his behavior. Poor Peter. The Bible recounts some really great things Peter did and it also tells us about some of his really big mistakes. He’s a faithful – but flawed - servant, like we all are - and because of his faithfulness God used him despite his flaws. He’s a great guy for us to remember.

This is one of Peter’s big mistakes. The Judaizers arrive in Antioch and Peter changes his behavior – he doesn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. Paul says Peter “feared the party of the circumcision.” Why would Peter care so much? There must have been some pretty good political/theological battles going on with the Judaizers back in Jerusalem. They must have had some influence if they could influence Peter. Whatever it was, he didn’t want to cross them. Now he won’t eat with the Gentiles. What does this behavior imply? Paul says “*they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel*”. Their behavior was not consistent with the gospel. Their behavior says that Jews are still defiled if they eat with Gentiles. What does this imply? It implies that they are all still under Law. And the Jewish believers can’t fellowship with the Gentile believers unless the Gentiles become Jews. There’s no unity, the Body of Christ is split. And more than that – it implies that even though they have been justified by faith, the Law still has a place in sanctification. That is what Peter’s change of behavior communicates. And, since he is one of the “pillars” of the church, of high reputation, all the rest of the Jews start to follow him. Paul says - *The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.* EVEN BARNABAS. Think about that – even Barnabas – Barnabas who had been with Paul for so many years, Barnabas who had visited Jerusalem with Paul and Titus when they stood up to the Judaizers – had not yielded for “even an hour”, Barnabas who had teamed with Paul on their first missionary journey to Cyprus and Galatia. Barnabas who knew the true gospel cold. Peter’s behavior even turned Barnabas. You really wonder how that could even happen. If it could happen to Barnabas, it could happen to pretty much every other Jewish believer. That is why this behavior was so bad. That is why this is so serious.

And that is what I think Paul realized would happen if he and Barnabas had yielded to the Judaizers when they took Titus to Jerusalem. Remember verse 2:5 - “*we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.*” Peter had now done in Antioch what Paul and Barnabas had refused to do in Jerusalem - they knew if they gave in it would hurt the gospel. Peter apparently didn’t. Peter, when pressured by the Judaizers did yield to the pressure – and look what happened. The gospel was compromised. Peter caved, this caused all the Jews, including Barnabas to cave. Their behavior would have completely legitimized the false gospel – the gospel of legalism. This was no small thing. That is why Paul had to confront Peter and why he had to do it publicly. The truth of the gospel was at stake.

Paul knew the depth of the consequences Peter's behavior would have. And his response goes to the heart of it. Now, this is a turning point in Galatians - this is the place in Galatians where Paul begins to shift over into his defense of the true gospel – why we cannot justify ourselves by works, only by faith. Here's what Paul said – starting with verse 14 – [Slide] *“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?”* If Peter – a Jew (who was given the Law) – has the freedom to live like a Gentile (who is not under the Law) – how can he compel the Gentiles to live like Jews (put themselves under the Law)? If a Jew can live free from the Law, on what basis can that Jew compel a Gentile to live under the Law. What Peter was communicating by his behavior was contrary to what Peter knew the true gospel to be - his behavior was saying that the Law was still effective and was necessary to produce righteousness. So - the Gentiles needed to put themselves under the Law. Devastating to the gospel.

Paul goes on to explain. He says: *“We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; 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.”* Even us Jews - who have the Law - have come to know that even we are not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ. And even we have believed in Christ so that we will be justified by faith and not works of the Law, since we know that no man is justified by works of the Law. The logic is this - since this is the case even for us Jews, how can we compel the Gentiles to live as if they can be justified by works of the Law. If the Law can't even justify Jews, how in the world can the Law justify Gentiles? We know that it can't be done – by works of the Law no flesh – Jew or Gentile – can be justified. No man can justify himself by works of the Law. The Law does not have that power.

Notice something – in that one verse, Paul says three times that the Law cannot justify. And he also says three times, faith justifies. In one verse. Can you get much clearer? We are justified by faith, not works of the Law.

Note that here, in context, I think Paul is using the term “justified” in a broad sense – both Phase 1 – declared righteous – and Phase 2 – sanctification. Faith accomplishes both. Works accomplish neither. Paul has just made that abundantly clear.

Now, having made that point clear, Paul goes on to address an accusation that the Judaizers may have made against the true gospel – *“But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin?”* The Judaizers were apparently arguing that Paul's gospel can't be the true gospel because, if it was, it would make Christ a “minister of sin” – Christ would be promoting sin. He's increasing the number of sinners as well as increasing sin itself. If works of the Law do not make a person righteous, then even the Jews who follow the Law can't make themselves righteous. That increases the number of sinners – both Jews and Gentiles are sinners. And if the Law is not a means of righteousness, what's to keep sin itself from increasing? Taking the Law out of the picture will lead to licentious living. That is an argument that is still made today. Sounds like the Judaizers jumped on that one pretty quick.

Is Christ a minister of sin? Paul says emphatically - “May it never be!” No, that is absolutely not what the true gospel means.

He goes on to explain – vs 18: *“¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.”* Paul is saying that Christ is certainly not a minister of sin. On the contrary, if you are rebuilding what you once destroyed, you are showing that you are the transgressor – you are the one promoting sin. Not Christ.

What was destroyed? The Law, or better – the relationship to the Law – its curse and power. Look at verse 19: *“¹⁹ For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.* The expression “died to the Law” obviously doesn’t mean physical death – it means the termination of a relationship – just like death terminates a marriage. Or remember in Fiddler on the Roof where Tevye tells his daughter - “you’re dead to me”. It’s the cutting off of a relationship. So, what was destroyed in verse 18 was the relationship to the Law. Destroying this relationship was necessary, and to rebuild it is sin. Belief results in death to the Law - which equates to destruction of the relationship to the Law. And verse 19 tells us that this death to Law had to occur in order to “live to God”. This is completely contrary to the idea that the Law produces righteousness, Paul is saying that “death to the Law” must occur in order to live to God. In order to live to God, you must die to the Law. It is a prerequisite to living to God. This is what happens when we believe. Paul is talking about a one time positional change.

How did this death to Law occur? Was it anything we did? No, it’s all Christ’s work. Go to verse 20: *““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.”* When we believe, we are identified with Christ in his crucifixion – so much so that Paul says we have been crucified with Christ. Christ’s death is our death. For a Jewish believer under the Law, it cut off any relationship with the Law. So, if this identification with Christ cuts off the Law for a Jewish believer, it certainly means that the Law doesn’t apply to a Gentile believer. The Judaizers are all wrong – they think that the Jewish believers are under the Law and that Gentile believers need to be brought under the Law. No – no more Law for Jews and no bringing Gentiles under the Law. No more Law. All believers – Jew and Gentile - have been crucified with Christ and we are no longer the ones living, but Christ is living in us. The Law doesn’t apply to Christ so it doesn’t apply to any believer – Jew or Gentile.

Paul didn’t stop there – he refers to this new relationship we have with Christ – Christ living in us – and recognizing that, until we physically die, we must still live in our flesh, he tells us how we are supposed to live. It’s not by Law. We are supposed to by faith in Christ. Why? Because of what He’s done for us - He loved us and gave Himself up for us. There will be more explanation about these things later in Galatians.

Finally, Paul wraps it all up and explains what happens if we try to live as though we can make ourselves righteous through the works of the Law:

[Slide] *²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”*

If I think that I can make myself righteous through Law, I am nullifying – invalidating or even rejecting - God’s grace – His unmerited favor towards us. Because if righteousness could come by works of the Law, then man would have the power in himself to work and make himself righteous. If that is the case, why would we need God’s grace? Why would Christ have to die? He wouldn’t. Christ’s death would be unnecessary. We could save ourselves. We could “live to God” without Christ. This is the logical conclusion of the Judaistic false gospel. If you Galatians

think the Judaizers are right, and you can make yourself righteous, then you are saying you don't need God's grace, and then you must conclude that Christ's death – the very substance of that grace - was not necessary. That point alone should explode their whole argument.

As you know, there's a lot more to the concepts in this passage - dying to the Law, being crucified with Christ, Christ living in me, etc. – and Paul didn't specifically address the power of the sin nature and the Law – and we could turn to other passages in other books and even later on in Galatians and flesh some of it out. But Paul didn't flesh those things out right here in this passage, and in an effort to stick to his logic, I've tried to limit this to what I think his specific argument is right here. Some of the things he brings up later in Galatians will touch on this, and we will talk about them later in the context of those passages.

The Judaizers had a fundamental misunderstanding of faith, righteousness, the purpose and power of the Law, the power of the flesh, and the need for Christ. This misunderstanding led to the false gospel they were teaching. Next week we are going to cover the arguments Paul used to correct this misunderstanding.