

Galatians 2:1-14

Jesus. And That's All.

Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2 I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

6 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as 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 circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For 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. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas 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?”

Introduction: In order to understand Paul’s words for the rest of his letter, we need to put ourselves in the context of the early church. People from all cultures and backgrounds were hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, many believed. We rejoice that this happened. Unfortunately, long standing feuds, prejudices, racism and traditions stood in the way of the new Christians being united. Major sections of the Book of Acts and the epistles are dedicated to this issue. Imagine two people sitting together in the pews, each saying, “I love Jesus and I hate you.” That’s a problem! The big division was between Jewish converts and Gentile converts.

In the Church in Galatia, one of the specific issues that caused division among the early Christians was rearing its ugly head. Read Acts 15:1-5 below to understand the issue.

Acts 15:1-5 - But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. 3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.[a] 4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. 5 But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”

Vs. 1-3 - With that context provided above, answer the following question. Why did anyone care if Titus was circumcised or not? For those of us who are not Titus, what is THE problem with circumcising Titus?

Vs. 4-5 - What does Paul mean when he speaks of his “freedom” and being made a “slave?”

- By not giving in to them, what did Paul preserve? How is this so?

Vs. 6-10 - What was the division of duties among the apostles? Who went to whom?

Vs. 11-14 - What happened to Peter and what did Paul do? What was at stake?

Vs. 15-16 - What was Paul's point to Peter.

The dream that was given to Peter.

15-17 - What does the words "justified" mean and how are we justified?

Just as important, how are NOT justified? See Ephesians 2:8-9.

Do "good" people go to Heaven? Can you make up for your sins before God? Do you good works "count" as merit to earn your way to Heaven?

Vs. 17-21 -

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15 "We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles 16 know that a person is not justified by the works of 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[d] Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

17 "But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

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 now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"[e]