



WEEK 2

GALATIANS CHAPTER 2

TIMELINE OF GALATIANS

DATE (ALL ARE APPROX)	DESCRIPTION	GALATIANS	ACTS
AD 34	Saul, also known as Paul, persecuted the followers of Jesus. (shortly after Jesus' death & resurrection)	1:13-14	9:1-2
AD 34	Saul/Paul has an encounter with Jesus & is converted on the way to Damascus.	1:15-16a	9:3-19a
AD 34-37	Paul spends time in Arabia; returns to Damascus to preach that Jesus is the Messiah	1:17	9:19-22; cf. 9:27
AD 37	Paul visited Jerusalem three years after his conversion.	1:18-20	9:26-29
AD 37-47	Paul preached in Syria and Cilicia.	1:21-24	9:30-31
AD 47	Paul visited Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion. It is possible this is what is known as the Jerusalem Council	2:1-10	11:27-30 15:6-29
AD 47-48	Paul with Barnabas planted churches in Gentile territory, Galatia included, during Paul's first missionary journey.		13:1-14:28
AD 49	At the Council of Jerusalem, Paul argues successfully that Gentile Christians need not follow Jewish law; returns to Antioch; confronts Peter over question of Jewish law		15
AD 52-55	Paul wrote Galatians.	1:1-6:18	

WHY WAS PAUL SO PASSIONATE ABOUT CONFRONTING THIS FALSE GOSPEL?

In short, because the stakes were high... this false gospel was threatening true church unity. On the one side of this dispute we have Paul, who is saying: The gospel of faith in Christ is for people of all cultures. On the other we have his opponents, claiming: Not all Jewish people are Christians, but all Christians must become Jewish. Neither side would have accepted the other fully, and would have questioned if the others were saved! Paul's Gentile churches would doubt that the Jewish churches really had faith in Christ, and the Jewish churches would also doubt the salvation of the Gentiles. The other apostles had stayed in Jerusalem, and they had not worked out the implications of the gospel for Gentiles who were converting from paganism. They simply had not confronted most of these issues practically. It would have been extremely easy for them to miss the implications of the gospel when it came to living as a Gentile Christian. It would have felt natural for them to say: Of course all Christians should eat kosher! or something similar. But the ramifications of such a "small" mistake would have been enormous. That's why Paul said that "the freedom we have in Christ" (v 2:4) was under threat, and therefore that the very "truth of the gospel" was at stake (v 2:5). This meeting could have ended up splitting the church; and at such an early stage in its life, two virtually different religions would have emerged. No wonder Paul felt fear. The stakes could not have been higher. Paul says "they added nothing to my message" (v 2:6). The Jerusalem apostles agreed that it is faith in Christ alone, and not any other performance or ritual, that is necessary for salvation. The implications of this are fundamental to our understanding of what the Christian faith is. The countless regulations for "cleanliness" in the laws of Moses were designed (among other things) to show us how impossible it was to make ourselves perfectly acceptable before a holy God. But these "false brothers" had used the regulations in order to teach the exact opposite: that we could make ourselves pure and more acceptable to God through strict compliance with them.

Written by Tim Keller - *Galatians For You*

THE TRUE GOSPEL

God's acceptance through Christ = Enough

THE FALSE GOSPEL

God's acceptance through Christ + select Mosaic laws = Enough



ENTER JESUS OFFERING SALVATION TO ALL PEOPLE



GOD NOW PROMISES TO PUT HIS
SPIRIT _____
IN HIS PEOPLE AND TO CAUSE THEM
TO WALK IN HIS STATUTES AND OBEY HIS RULES.

WEEK 2

DAY 8 - MONDAY

Galatians 2:1-10, Isaiah 19:21-25

Please refer to pages 16-17 for background and context on today's reading.

In today's reading in Isaiah, we see this prophecy of the Egyptians worshipping with the Assyrians together alongside Israel. A foreshadowing of a time in the future when the Jewish and Gentile nations would unite under the banner of Jesus Christ. The whole world—represented by Egypt and Assyria, at either end of Isaiah's historical landscape—united in worship. God's plan is to win worshipers from all nations, not just from Israel.

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Paul talks often of the body of Christ and the rubber of ethnic differences meets the road of his ministry in Galatians. And in chapter 2, he specifically explains that the apostles to the Jews (James, Peter, and John) agreed with him that there was no need for Titus or other Gentile Christians to submit to Jewish ritual law. I feel Galatians reading me as much as I am reading it. What expectations do I have for other believers, and for myself? What do I think Christians should look like, act like? How should they think and feel? What do I add to the truth, or what do I believe that others have added? Paul shows us how true discipleship and evangelism should be shaped by Christ, not the world. It is as simple, and as profoundly complicated, as "God does not show favoritism" (Gal 2:6). We can substitute categories from centuries of Church history into the slots of "Jew" and "Gentile," but the truth does not change. The gospel is just as true for you as it is for me or anyone else. Our salvation is based only on the finished work of Christ—nothing we do or don't do can change it. We are secure in our Savior.

Written by Melanie Rainer - *She Reads Truth*

**WHAT STOOD OUT IN TODAY'S
READING?**

Go to graceclarksville.com/intheword for additional study resources.

WEEK 2

DAY 9 - TUESDAY

Acts 15:1-29, Galatians 2:1-10

We read in Acts today about the Jerusalem Council. The passages from Acts help us understand the background and context of what Paul is talking about in Galatians 2. See pages 16-17 for more details of the timeline.

REMEMBER THE POOR

In Galatians 2:10, Paul reminds them to remember the poor. Paul is afraid that the believers have lost their focus by pointing fingers at one another about who is following the law rather than focusing on what it looks like to serve one another. The heart of his reminder is to keep their eyes on the mission of Christ who came with gentleness and humility to serve the “least of these.”

**DO YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF
DISTRACTED FROM THE MISSION
OF CHRIST TO SERVE OTHERS?**

**PRAY TODAY FOR GOD TO OPEN
YOUR EYES TO THE PLACES
WHERE YOU CAN “REMEMBER
THE POOR”.**

WEEK 2

DAY 10 - WEDNESDAY

Galatians 2:11-21, Acts 10:9-48

GOD DOESN'T SHOW FAVORITISM

Today, we see Paul confront Peter (also known as Cephas). To understand why Paul is upset with Peter, we have to go back to the Acts 10 passage where we see God showing Peter through a vision that ALL (Gentiles and Jews) are equal in his eyes. God gave Peter this vision and then later directed Peter to the home of a Roman centurion, named Cornelius. Cornelius accepted Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. God was willing to give his Holy Spirit even to Gentiles who would repent and believe in Jesus. After the vision & this conversion, Peter says "Now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism" (Acts 10:34). Peter shifted his way of thinking after this encounter and began to regularly eat with Gentiles. But then later as we see in our Galatians passage, Peter reverted back to his old ways of separating himself from the Gentiles. This upset Paul and pushed him to confront Peter's behavior in the Galatians passage.

Tim Keller says this in his book *Galatians For You*, "Peter was allowing cultural differences to become more important than gospel unity. Paul does not primarily see his fellow apostle's behavior as rude, or unmannered, or unwelcoming, as we might. Fundamentally, he sees that something deeper is going on. Peter is 'not acting in line with the truth of the gospel' (Galatians 2:14)."

N.T. Wright says in his study of Galatians, "The question Paul and Peter have run into, which was focused on whether Jewish and Gentile Christians were allowed to eat at the same table, is the question 'Who are the true people of God?' Paul's answer is simple: all who are 'in the Messiah' are the true people of God. That means believing Gentiles as well as believing Jews. The heart of Paul's argument is that one must lose everything, including the memory of who one was before, and one must accept and learn to live by a new identity with a new foundation."

WHAT OLD IDENTITIES HAVE YOU DISCARDED OR SHOULD YOU DISCARD BECAUSE OF YOUR NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST?

DOES SEEING OTHERS THROUGH THEIR IDENTITY IN CHRIST CHANGE THE WAY YOU BEHAVE TOWARDS THEM?

WEEK 2

DAY 11 - THURSDAY

Galatians 2:11-21

JUSTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

This latter half of Galatians 2 is one of the strongest rebukes of an apostle in the Bible. Paul calls Peter (also known as Cephas), a hypocrite who deviated from the true gospel. Peter had been eating non-Jewish-law-approved meals with Gentile Christians. But when a group of radical Jewish leaders called the circumcision party disapproved, Peter stopped eating with Gentiles. The Judaizers believed that to be a true Christian, a Gentile had to become Jewish first and follow Jewish law.

In his book, *Galatians for You*, Tim Keller writes, "Paul did not simply say: You're breaking the rules (even though Peter was), but: You've forgotten the gospel: your own gracious welcome in Christ. Paul did not focus so much on the sinful behavior as on the sinful attitude of self-righteousness that lay beneath it."

More often than I wish I, like Peter, wonder, how can I live out my faith but in a way that doesn't make other people angry or uncomfortable? I live in the irreconcilable tension of seeking the approval of both God and man (directly antithetical to what we read a few days ago in Galatians 1:10).

After rebuking Peter, Paul goes on to make one of the most impassioned, beautiful expositions of the true gospel. He says, "a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ... I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (vv.16,21).

Paul spends the rest of Galatians building on this truth: the traditional Jewish law does not save or purify people, only faith in Christ who died and rose again. The approval of other people doesn't save you either, and you only need acceptance by God the Father, gained by the righteousness of Christ given to us when we believe. All we need is in Christ. All we have is Christ. Christ did not die for nothing; He died for you and me.

Written by Melanie Rainer - *She Reads Truth*

PAUL IS ASKING THE QUESTION, WHY DO WE SEEK APPROVAL FROM MAN WHEN WE ARE ALREADY JUSTIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? DO YOU LIVE IN THE TENSION BETWEEN PLEASING GOD AND MAN?

WHAT DID GOD REVEAL TO YOU TODAY ABOUT LIVING IN THAT TENSION?

WEEK 2

DAY 12 - FRIDAY

Galatians 2:16-21

So what is Paul trying to say here? He is saying that the law shows us how we should live, but also shows us that we will never be able to keep the works of the law perfectly, so we need a Savior. Paul, knowing this fact says he "was crucified with Christ" and he "died to the law" because it was not the law that made him acceptable and clean before the Lord, it was the fact that he was "crucified with Christ"...he was covered by the blood of Jesus and made clean.

As Tim Keller says, "If we could save ourselves, Christ's death is pointless, and means nothing. If we realize we cannot save ourselves, Christ's death will mean everything to us. And we will spend the life that He has given us in joyful service of Him, bringing our whole lives into line with the gospel. Now that he is justified and accepted, Paul has a new motive for obedience that is far more wholesome and powerful. He wants simply to live for the one "who loved me and gave himself for me" (v 20)."

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Our lives are no longer our own. Christ lives in us and works through us. He brings with Him life after death. That's the way of the gospel. Paul reminds us of the time Peter struggled to walk in the freedom of the gospel. Christ's cross and empty tomb finished the demands of the law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). If the law were a subway, Christ is the final stop. Everyone off. If the law were a movie, Christ is the hero-scene. Roll the credits. With Christ, we've died to the law, and we now live with Christ.

If you are a Christian, your commitment to Him is more than merely believing that a man from Nazareth was crucified under Roman occupation. You were crucified, too, right along with Him. And when Christ walked out of that borrowed burial site, you walked out, too—into new life. Christ lives in you, and you live by faith. Why did Christ do all of this for you? Because He knew you were going to be a great Christian? Ha! No, not at all. He knew you and I would be bumbling followers of The Way. Did He do all of this because our good works caught His attention? Nope. Paul is clear: Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us out of His great love for us (Ephesians 2:4-5). Live freely in Christ, with Christ, and for Christ.

Written by J.A. Medders - *He Reads Truth*

**WHAT DOES BEING
"CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST"
MEAN TO YOU?**

WEEK 2

DAY 13 - SATURDAY - GRACE DAY

Use today to rest, pray and catch up on any of this week's reading that you missed.

In this week's reading:

1. *What themes did you see emerge?*
2. *What was the biggest thing that God revealed to you this week?*
3. *What next step do you need to take based on what He revealed to you this week?*

WEEK 2

DAY 14 - SUNDAY - REFLECTION DAY

Reflect on Galatians 2:20

"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."

Of course, Paul was not literally crucified with Christ on the cross, but what Paul means is that when we accept Jesus as our Savior, we die to our old self and our old ways and take up a new way of life with Christ living within us. Because of our acceptance of Jesus and his blood shed for us on the cross, we now stand justified (clean) in the eyes of God, this is not a status we earned, but a gift given to us through our faith in Christ. We now get to live in the light of His unexplainable love for us and share His love with all those around us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR WEEK 2

How are you most tempted to seek the approval of men? What would change if instead of seeking the approval of men, you sought to please the God who already approves of you?

Do you find yourself returning to the works of the law to feel acceptable to God even though Jesus came to free us from the law?

When God looks at you, you stand justified (clean) before Him because of the blood of Jesus. Is that hard for you to accept?