



GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE



SESSION 21 | OVERVIEW, PART 3 | GALATIANS 2:15-3:5

A PROPOSED OUTLINE

1. Galatians 1:1-12 | Paul Introduces His Gospel and the Dilemma of the Letter. – see session 19
2. Galatians 1:13-24 | Paul's Theological Journey prior to the Mystery – see session 20
3. Galatians 2:1-21 | Paul's Theological Journey after the Mystery
 - 3.1. Galatians 2:1-14 | **Paul forces Mystery to confront Status Quo** – see session 20
 - 3.2. Galatians 2:15-21 | **Paul explains** Justification in the Age of Grace **to the Jews**
4. Galatians 3:1- 5:12 | Paul Confronts the Judaizers and their Theology
 - 4.1. Galatians 3:1-5 | The Bewitched Galatians

GALATIANS 2:1-21 | PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL JOURNEY AFTER THE MYSTERY

GALATIANS 2:1-14 | PAUL FORCES MYSTERY TO CONFRONT STATUS QUO

- Session 20

GALATIANS 2:15-21 | PAUL EXPLAINS JUSTIFICATION IN THE AGE OF GRACE TO THE JEWS

- Verses 15-16 – The new dispensation of Grace.
 - These verses explain the fundamental theological change that has taken place in Paul's lifetime, one that was so fundamental that it created a new dispensation.
 - Paul's audience for these verses is **Jews by nature** who have **believed in Jesus Christ**, but not just as Kingdom-era believers (such as Peter, etc.), but have trusted in Jesus in order to be **justified by faith** and **not by the works of the law**.
 - The fundamental issue of the dispensations is whether your trust is in Christ or in the Law.
 - Notice that the issue is not whether you trust in your *faith in Christ* or your *works in the Law*, but rather you trust *in Christ* or *in the Law*.
 - Does *your faith* (of *faith in Christ*) save you? Absolutely not.
 - The **faith of Christ** is that which paid for the gift of my salvation.
 - Notice that verse 16 gives a distinction between the **faith of Christ** and *belief in Jesus Christ* (**even we who believed in Jesus Christ**).
 - The **faith of Christ** allows us to *believe in Christ* so that we can be **justified by Christ**.
 - If I can be justified by my faith in Jesus, then I bring something of my own to the salvation equation (and thus it is not a gift). I am not justified by my faith, but *His faith* justifies, and I receive His gracious gift of justification *through my faith*.
 - Did *your works* justify in the age of the Law? Absolutely not.
 - The **works of law** were the *accomplishments of the Law itself* that brought (in their dispensation) justification.

- The things accomplished by the law (**works of law**) were received by the Old Testament Jew when he/she performed the *demands of the law*.
- Is justification by faith *new* or has it always been?
 - If it has *always been*, then there is no new dispensation.
 - Even most dispensationalists (though not “right dividers”) tend to *undo their own dispensationalism* when they argue that justification has always been “by grace through faith.”
 - The last words of v. 16 seem to support the “always been” view: **by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**.
 - If these words are true *and* have always been true, then dispensationalism must be abandoned.
 - They certainly *are* true. Have they *always been true*?
 - Paul had previously said **the doers of the law shall be justified** (Rom. 2:13). In that context, he was not talking about this dispensation of Grace, but he was certainly speaking truth, and that truth has to be dealt with by the “always by grace through faith” crowd.”
- Verses 17-19 – The dispensation of Grace does not offend the Law.
 - Verse 17 is a rhetorical question: *if it is a sin to abandon the works of the law in favor of the faith of Christ, has Christ then become the agent of sin?*
 - It was (and is) the Judaizing position that a person would be sinning by not obeying the law.
 - Galatian Judaizers: *you are sinning if you are not circumcised*.
 - Sabbatarian Judaizers: *you are sinning if you are not worshiping on Saturday*.
 - Baptist Judaizers: *you are sinning if you are not tithing*.
 - With this position, the accusation would be that “You followed Christ right into sin,” and thus Christ is the **minister of sin**.
 - The Galatian Christians were not being circumcised because they followed Christ’s teachings through Paul. Were they in sin, and thus Christ was their *agent* of sin? Paul answers: **God forbid**.
 - Verse 18 – If Paul **destroyed** the Law as a means of justification, he would prove himself a sinner to rebuild it.
 - Verse 19 – Paul (and any Christian) can never go back to law observance. He is **through the law...dead to the law**. This is because (as in Rom. 4:15) **the law worketh wrath** in the one who does not obey it. The law had no provision for Paul’s return to legal obedience. Any return would be *too little too late*.
- Verses 20-21 – My life in this dispensation
 - I do not live in *the Law* but rather *in Christ* and **by the faith of Christ**. His faith was shown in that not only has he **loved me** but He also **gave himself for me**.
 - Now, living in the *completed work of Christ*, I **do not frustrate the grace of God** by mixing it with law and elements of works.
 - If *any* element of works could satisfy for justification, then **Christ is dead in vain**.

GALATIANS 3:1-5 | THE BEWITCHED GALATIANS

- It would be one thing for those who do not know much about Christ to be fooled, but it is very different when Jesus has been **evidently set forth** is fooled.
- Paul does not blame the *Judaizers* in these verses, he blames the Galatians. We have a responsibility to make sound theological decisions based on truth. If we do not, we are *foolish*!
- As Christians, we were almost altogether shared a gospel of grace and we started out in grace. Paul’s instruction: *stick with grace!*
- Can we be **made perfect by the flesh** (v. 3)? Absolutely not! We start by faith, and we must finish by faith!