

Easy As 1-2-3



Galatians Chapter 2

It's as Easy As 1-2-3. Select where you would like to begin and enjoy!

[1-Overall Understanding \(below\)](#)

[2- Detailed Study Notes](#)

[3-Listen and Learn](#)

Overall Understanding

Galatians 2¹

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. 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. ³ Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Some commentators think these fourteen years are added to the three Paul just mentioned in Chapter 1 and other think it was fourteen years after Paul's conversion. Most of them do acknowledge that this visit to Jerusalem included what is called The Jerusalem Council written about in Acts 15 at which the topic of whether the Gentiles needed to be circumcised AND keep the Law of Moses was hotly debated.

He went up by revelation which likely means simply that God told him to go. He shared the message they preached to the Gentiles.

It appears he was more privately sharing this with "those who were of reputation." Perhaps this was because he knew the sensitivity the Jews would have to not circumcising the Gentiles.

¹ Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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

These false brethren were Jews who'd heard about their "liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." This is the liberty from the law. The goal of these false brethren was to bring the Gentiles into submission to the law of Moses.

Paul speak of their undying commitment to not submit to them—to the law. By doing so, the truth of the gospel would continue among the Gentiles.

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. 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 ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 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. ¹⁰ They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

The conclusion of the Jerusalem Council was that the Gentiles who were receiving Jesus did not have to be circumcised nor keep the law of Moses. There was an understanding that Peter would continue ministering primarily to the Jews and Paul and Barnabas would continue ministering to the Gentiles.

One principle feature of Christianity is to remember the poor. Christian charity organizations contribute over \$100,000,000.00 (100 billion dollars) annually, and this does not take into account what Christians do privately for their neighbors, family, and friends to help those in need. Nor does it include what governments motivated by the Christian principle to give to the poor. In 2024, the U.S.A. gave over \$1,000,000,000 (one trillion dollars) in Medicare alone, along with other financial assistance programs.

You might not have an opportunity to directly give to the poor, but you can easily support legitimate ministries that do. Give willingly and cheerfully knowing this honors God.

¹¹ Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 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. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Peter was given a divine dream in which God told him that the Gentiles were no longer to be considered unclean and that all foods were acceptable to eat. He sent him to Gentiles to preach the gospel. If anyone should have understood that the Gentiles nor their foods were unclean, it was Peter. But when certain men came from James, the brother of Jesus who wrote the book of James. "The circumcision" were Christians who believed the Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.

The Jews did not eat with Gentiles because they considered them unclean. They also did not eat the food the Gentiles ate because the law said it was unclean.

When they came, Peter, who above all others, should have known better, separated himself from the Gentiles with whom he had eaten and fellowshiped because he was afraid of what the circumcision might think of him. Not just Peter but the rest of the Jewish Christians who were with Paul, even Barnabas. Paul said it clearly. This was hypocrisy. But, we will see it was worse than hypocrisy.

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?"

Paul says that by separating themselves from the Gentile believers, Peter and the others were not being "straightforward about the truth of the gospel. They were saying to the Gentiles that the ways of the Jews was superior.

¹⁵ We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

¹⁶ 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. 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!

*Paul states it clearly, both Jews and Gentiles are justified (made righteous before God) by **faith** in Jesus Christ and not by the works of the law.*

¹⁸ For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

The things Paul “destroyed” were the works of the law.

Paul states that he died to the law, so that he might live to God.

Philippians 3:7-11

But what things were gain to me (his pedigree as a faithful Jew), these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

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.

This is a beautiful summary of the gospel—of what happens when we come to Jesus. Jesus told His disciples to pick up their cross and follow Him. When we believe in Jesus. We are crucified with Him. That person who was before ceases to be. We become new creations. Jesus Christ lives in us. This describes our salvation.

Then, there is the life we now live meaning that we were also raised with Him. We are not dead. We are alive.

*We were saved by grace through faith, AND this is how we live—
“by faith in the Son of God.”*

Jesus loved us by giving Himself in death for us on the cross. He loves us. He loves me. He loves you. We live by faith in Jesus who loved us.

²¹I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Many have memorized verse 20 (above) because of the beauty of it, but seldom do they memorize verse 21. Verse 20 is often taught but often verse 21 is omitted.

Why?

Who knows the motivations of others, but this verse is CRUCIAL to understanding why Paul is so upset with Peter’s hypocrisy. It insulted what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross.

In the Greek “to set aside” the grace of God means:

- ***disesteem*** the grace of God
- ***neutralize*** the grace of God
- ***violate*** the grace of God
- ***cast off*** the grace of God
- ***despise*** the grace of God
- ***disannul*** the grace of God
- ***frustrate*** the grace of God
- ***bring to nought*** the grace of God
- ***reject*** the grace of God

Remember that the grace of God refers to the gospel itself—especially as we see in verse 20. What stands in danger of being nullified here is the truth that we are made righteous before God through faith in Jesus Christ and not by the works of the law. He is the One who loved us, who took up the cross, who poured out His life to remove our sins and make us the very righteousness of God in Him. To suggest that keeping the law is somehow superior to faith alone is, in effect, to set aside the very grace of God—grace most clearly revealed in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

What is the effect of nullifying the grace of God? It is to say that Christ died in vain.

In vain means that Christ died:

- *gratuitously (without reason) -*
- *without a cause*
- *for nothing*
- *in vain (for no reason)*
- *His death was useless*

Did Jesus die in vain? God forbid! No wonder Paul pronounced a curse on anyone teaching “another” gospel.

We the church must ask ourselves if we are preaching the correct gospel. Do we teach that we are made righteous by faith or is there not a long list of expectations we put upon ourselves and others that we think will give us improved standing with God.

It is very important for us to consider. Our precious Jesus did not die in vain. If we were able to be right before God by what we do, then Jesus didn't need to die.

Click to view two inspirational videos on this topic.

[Just a Moment of Grace: Galatians 2:21](#)

[Memorizing Grace: Galatians 2:20-21](#)

Topics Coming Up in Galatians Chapter Three

Paul asks an important question: Is it only at salvation that we are saved by grace through faith alone?

He discusses the working of miracles.

He writes about the curse of the law.

He gives the current purpose of the law.

He declares all Christians as equal in Christ.