

4. Defending the Gospel



In Chapter 2, we see the inner conflict within the Church as Jewish believers come to terms with the meaning of the Gospel. For many Jews, understanding the totality of Grace through the saving work of Jesus was hard. They were reluctant to give up aspects of the Law, because many did not understand how the Law was only a shadow of better things to come. They were used to the shadow and reluctant to embrace the reality. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the Law, therefore obedience to the Law was not required for “Justification¹”, Jesus justified us before God. This is the point the author of Hebrews makes to his Jewish audience.

Heb 8:1-6

- (1) Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,
- (2) a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.
- (3) For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.
- (4) Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.
- (5) They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”

- (6) But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

Pau’s goal is to make sure the Galatians understand the conflict is not a new. How are the “Law” and the “Gospel” reconciled? Paul relates how he took Titus, a Greek convert, with to Jerusalem, the Apostles (Peter, James) and did not require Titus to fulfill the Law, and they accepted him as a believer. Paul and Barnabas were given the right hand of fellowship by apostles who accepted and agreed with their work.

Paul is showing the unity of the Gospel, both for Jewish and Gentile believers, there are not two Gospels but one, this applies to both Gentile and Jews. Paul’s ministry is to the Gentiles while Peter’s was primarily to the Jewish, despite this both had the same Gospel.

Gal 2:1-10

- (1) Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.
- (2) I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.
- (3) But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.
- (4) Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—
- (5) to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.
- (6) And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.

¹ Justification: δικαιώω dikaiōō

1) to render righteous or such he ought to be

2) to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered

3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be

- (7) On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised
- (8) (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),
- (9) and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- (10) Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

(1) Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. **Galatians 2:1**

Verse (1): Paul continues to explain his biographical testimony of ministry, **fourteen years I went up again**, the first time Paul went to Jerusalem after his conversion (Gal 1:18) was fourteen years earlier. Here are the events of the timeline:

1. Paul initially went to Damascus to find the believers and bring them back to Jerusalem.
2. He meets Jesus on the road and becomes a follower of Christ after being healed by Ananias.
3. Paul then goes out to the Arabian desert for "unknown" time, he then returns to Damascus (Gal. 1:17), spends time with the disciples at Damascus (Acts 9:19).
4. After this Paul begins to preach "the Christ" in the synagogues, "that He is the Son of God".
5. He is then persecuted and has to escape Damascus in a large basket, being let down from the wall at night (Acts 9:25).
6. Paul then returns to Jerusalem, after three years, from the time he left, where he meets with Peter for 15-days, seeing only James the brother of Jesus. (Gal. 1:18-19).
7. Paul then goes to preach the Gospel in the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and eventually to the Galatians on his first missionary journey. (Acts 13-14).
8. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch.
9. In Antioch, Jewish believers from Jerusalem arrive, who start teaching "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1-2). This resulted in a dispute that need to be settled in Jerusalem.
10. Paul and Barnabas return to Jerusalem 14 years later. This resulted in the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), where it is declared circumcision was not required for salvation, but both Jew and Gentile were saved by belief (Acts 15:7)

Jerusalem with Barnabas: Paul and Barnabas became a team after Barnabas looked for Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch, there they both taught a whole year. Later both were sent on the First Missionary journey (Acts 13-14), where the churches of Galatia were founded. Paul and Barnabas return to Jerusalem to contend for the Gospel and to unify the message of "Faith". This was the declaration of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22-29).

Titus along with me: When Paul and Barnabas left Antioch for Jerusalem, they brought along a Greek convert to the faith named Titus. Titus became Paul's assistant and was involved in Church organization. Here Titus is Paul's evidence of a Greek convert to the faith of Jesus Christ, who was not circumcised. Titus was accepted by the Jewish believer in Christ, he was not forced to conform to the Law of Moses, and therefore he is Paul's evidence of his position.

I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. **Galatians 2:2**

Revelation: Paul's ministry was the result of a personal revelation of Jesus Christ to Paul, so this revelation could refer to the initial revelation on the road to Damascus or a later revelation when Paul was in deserts of Arabia (Gal. 1:18). The Gospel Paul taught was not his own, but he received it directly from Christ (Gal. 1:11). **Them:** When Paul was in Jerusalem he conferred with Peter, James and John (Gal. 2:9)

The Gospel that I proclaim: Paul's Gospel, was not his but Jesus, Paul's goal was to unify the message, Since the Judaizers were teaching a different Gospel, Paul wanted to get unity from leaders in Jerusalem, so the Gentiles would not be confused by those who claimed to have Gospel authority.

- (3) But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. **Galatians 2:3**



Justification

A forensic term, opposed to condemnation.

As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardon (q.v.) of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law ([Rom 5:1-10](#)).

It proceeds on the imputing or crediting to the believer by God himself of the perfect righteousness, active and passive, of his Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ ([Rom 10:3-9](#)). Justification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and for ever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness ([2Co 5:21](#); [Rom 4:6-8](#)).

The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is called a "condition," not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and his righteousness ([Rom 1:17](#); [Rom 3:25](#), [Rom 3:26](#); [Rom 4:20](#), [Rom 4:22](#); [Phi 3:8-11](#); [Gal 2:16](#)).

The act of faith which thus secures our justification secures also at the same time our sanctification (q.v.); and thus the doctrine of justification by faith does not lead to licentiousness ([Rom 6:2-7](#)). Good works, while not the ground, are the certain consequence of justification ([Rom 6:14](#); [Rom 7:6](#)).

opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Paul points to **Titus**, as prime evidence, how Titus treated by the Apostles in Jerusalem being a Greek convert? He was treated as a believer without being **circumcised**, if this is the case with Titus, it's the case with all Gentiles. Therefore, Paul proves his point circumcision is not required for salvation.

- (4) Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— **Galatians 2:4**

Paul makes a bold declaration, he calls the Judaizers **false brothers**, either meaning they were not believers, but claimed to be believers or their unity was a façade. They became part of the body, to corrupt the doctrine of the Gospel, they were opposed to the Gospel of the Christian of faith. Their goal was to impose a doctrine requiring works based salvation, they entered through a stealth operation. Once somebody feels they have to earn their salvation, they are no longer free but are under the yoke of **slavery**. Christ did all the work of salvation, once we feel we have to work for our salvation were loose the liberty of Christ.

Gal 5:1,13

- (1) For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.(13) For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an

- (5) to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. **Galatians 2:5**

Paul is reminding the Galatians, from the beginning he did not give in anyway. When Paul returned from his First Missionary journey, he was in Antioch when these false teachers arrived. Paul and Barnabas had a loud and contentious debate with them. Paul refused to any ground to a works based Gospel.

Act 15:2

- (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.

- (6) And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. **Galatians 2:6**

Who seemed to be influential: Paul's authority came directly from Jesus, he was not under the Apostles', Peter, James and John's authority.

Added nothing: Jesus is the founder of the church, the Gospel Paul preached was the same Gospel preached by Jesus and the Apostles. Paul was not about to seek to please people, his goal was to preach the message Jesus had given him, he was carrying out his divine commission. Nothing was added to Paul's message by those who seemed to be influential, since Paul message originated with Jesus not with human authority.

Act 15:4-9

- (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."
- (6) The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.
- (7) And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.
- (8) And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,
- (9) and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

- (7) On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised
- (8) (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),
- (9) and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- (10) Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Galatians 2:7-10

On the contrary: Paul goal is to show the Gospel is unified to both Jews and Gentiles, there are not two Gospels, one to the Jews and one to the Gentiles. Those who seemed to be influential (Peter, James and John) recognized Paul's mission to reach the Gentiles, **the uncircumcised**. Paul and Barnabas gave the update to the brothers in Jerusalem about the mission to the Gentiles, their work among the Gentiles was fully accepted.

Act 15:12-14

- (12) And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.
- (13) After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me.
- (14) Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.

Gospel to the circumcised: Peter in Acts takes the lead to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem, at Pentecost after Peter preached 3,000 souls came to faith in Christ (Acts 2:41) Later another 5,000 believe at the cripple at the Gate Beautiful is healed.

Act 4:1-4

- (1) And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them,
- (2) greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
- (3) And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.
- (4) But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

The Gospel proclaimed by Peter is the same Gospel proclaimed by Paul, one Gospel, two different groups, the Jews and Gentiles.

For he: The Lord Jesus, Jesus choose to use Peter to reach Jews and He choose Paul to go out to the Gentiles.

Worked through Peter: Though Peter's ministry was primarily to the Jews at first, God did unify the Gospel with His revelation to Peter, who was told to go to the house of Cornelius the Roman Centurion. There Peter saw the Gospel was to be offered to both Jew and Gentile, for Peter this was revelation,



Act 10:1-48

(1) At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort,

(2) a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

(3) About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius."

(4) And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

(5) And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.

(6) He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea."

(7) When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him,

(8) and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

(9) The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

(10) And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance

(11) and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

(12) In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.

(13) And there came a voice to him: "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat.**"

(14) But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."

(15) And the voice came to him again a second time, "**What God has made clean, do not call common.**"

(16) This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

(17) Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate

(18) and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there.

(19) And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you.

(20) Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

(21) And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?"

(22) And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say."

(23) So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

(24) And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

(25) When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.

(26) But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man."

(27) And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered.

(28) And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.

(29) So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me."

(30) And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing

(31) and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

- (32) Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.'
- (33) So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."
- (34) So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,
- (35) but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.
- (36) As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all),
- (37) you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed:
- (38) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.
- (39) And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,
- (40) but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,
- (41) not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
- (42) And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.
- (43) To him all the prophets bear witness **that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**"
- (44) While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.
- (45) And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.
- (46) For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,
- (47) "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"
- (48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.