

Crucified with Christ

Lesson Two: The Works of the Law

Galatians 2:1-10

1. What event is described in Galatians 2:1-2? Why did Paul do this? When in Acts did this occur?
2. According to Galatians 2:2-3, what did Paul do on this occasion? How did he do it? Why did he do it this way? What also revealed Paul's attitude toward circumcision?
3. What does Galatians 2:4 reveal about the origin of false teaching on circumcision? What did these people do? What was their object? What should this teach us?
4. What does Paul tell us about his attitude toward this teaching in Galatians 2:5? Why did he behave this way? What lesson should we draw from this?
5. What group is mentioned in Galatians 2:6? What was Paul's attitude toward this group? What did this group do for Paul? What does this mean to us?

Those of Reputation

Galatians 2 tells a story that casts one of the most beloved and revered figures of Christian tradition in a sharply negative light. In the 2000 years since the crucifixion of Jesus, many believers have chosen to elevate the apostle Peter to near-divine status himself. In a display of veneration that would likely have shocked the former fisherman, they pray to him, bow before his statues, and rely on a doctrinal tradition that emphasizes his infallibility.

In Galatians 2, however, this near-idol is presented with conspicuous feet of clay. Peter, of all people, knew that God had broken down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile. He knew that God wanted him to welcome every brother into fellowship, regardless of his ancestry. However, when put on the spot, Peter chose the path of hypocrisy. To avoid losing face before other Jews, he chose to pretend that those old barriers still existed. Only a white-hot rebuke from Paul brought Peter back.

Even though Peter was undeniably a good man, he was only a man, no more, no less. As has been true of every man other than our Lord, he had his faults, his foibles, his spiritual slip-ups, and his spiritual collapses. Anyone who places confidence in Peter is building on sand, not the Rock.

This lesson, however, applies not just to Peter, but to any of the other equally human men from antiquity until today. No one is perfect, and so no one is worthy of the trust that should only be placed in God and His word. We must always remember to revere the King, not His ambassadors. Such men may indeed be good men, but any power and authority they possess comes not from themselves, but from the message that they bear. Before all else, let us hear it.

6. As Paul recounts in Galatians 2:7-8, how did those of high reputation deal with Paul? Why? How does this relate to Mark 16:20? What can we learn from it?
7. What important people are mentioned in Galatians 2:9-10? What reputation did they have? What did they do? What was the importance of this act?

Galatians 2:11-21

1. What travel event does Galatians 2:11 next describe? Is this event recorded in Acts? How does Paul react on this occasion? Why? What does this show us?
2. According to Galatians 2:12-13, what was the former practice of Cephas? What happened next? How did Cephas react to this circumstance? Why? What result did this have? What lesson should it teach us?
3. In Galatians 2:14, what does Paul say he saw about the behavior of his countrymen? How did he deal with the problem? What question did he ask? What should we learn from Paul's behavior?
4. According to Paul's words in Galatians 2:15-16, what common origin did Cephas and Paul share? What did they do anyway? Why? What lesson does this hold for us?
5. What rhetorical question did Paul ask in Galatians 2:17-18? How does he answer it? Why? What application can we make from this today?
6. According to Galatians 2:19-20, what dealings did Paul have with the Law? How did this happen? What results did it have? What does this reveal about Paul's view of himself? Why is this important?
7. What does Paul say he does not do in Galatians 2:21? What does he say would have that effect? Why? What meaning does this have to Paul's overall argument?