

# Paul's Confrontation with Peter Leads to the Argument for Justification by Faith in Christ

Galatians 2:15-21 / July 30, 2022

Review: Authority of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles:  
*The Foundation for Justification by Faith in Christ, not by the Law*

**Thesis: God Revealed the Gospel of Grace by Faith to Paul** 1:11-24

1. Paul's Pre-Conversion: *The Foundation of Paul's Authority as an Apostle* (1:13-14)
2. Paul's Conversion: *His Call is from God, Not Men* (1:15-16a)
3. Paul's Isolation from the Apostles: *His Authority Was Not Given by the Apostles* (1:16b-17)
4. Paul's Short Visit to Jerusalem: *His Authority was not Given by Peter* (1:18-20)
5. Paul's Obscurity in Judea: *His Authority was not Approved by the Churches* (1:21-24)

**Thesis: The Apostles Ratify the Gospel of Grace by Faith to Paul** 2:1-21

1. Paul Goes to Jerusalem by God's Call to Privately Explain the Gospel to the Gentiles to the Apostles (2:1-2)
2. Paul Chooses Not to Circumcise Titus as a Sign of the Gospel to the Gentiles (2:3-5)
3. Paul Receives Fully the Apostles' Recognition of God's Authority of the Gospel to the Gentiles (2:6-9)
4. Paul Accepts the Apostles Invitation for the Gentile Churches to Help the Poor in Jerusalem (2:10)
5. Paul Rebukes Peter Publicly to Show Paul's Authority of the Gospel to the Gentiles (2:11-14)

**THE GOSPEL OF GRACE BY FAITH TO THE GENTILES: THE POINT OF VIEW OF PAUL AND PETER (2:15-17)**

**1. Peter and Paul were given the law as a promise of God's grace (1:15)**

**We** (Peter and Paul) ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

## **The Grace of God to the Jews**

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. (Romans 3:1-2, ESV)

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 9:1-5, ESV)

**2. but Peter and Paul were not justified by the law; (16a)**

yet we (Peter and Paul) know that a person is not justified by works of the law but

## No One Is Justified by the Law

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one; / no one understands; / no one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; / no one does good, / not even one.”

“Their throat is an open grave; / they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.” / “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

“Their feet are swift to shed blood; / in their paths are ruin and misery,

and the way of peace they have not known.” / “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:9-20, ESV)

### 3. rather, Peter and Paul were justified by faith in Christ,

(16b)

through faith in Jesus Christ, so we (Peter and Paul) also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and

## Justification by Faith

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26, ESV)

### 4. because no one, Jews or Gentiles, will be justified by works of the law

(16c)

not by works of the law, because by works of the law **no one** will be justified.

## Abraham: Not Justified by the Works of the Law

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” (Romans 4:1-8, ESV)

### 5. since the law will reveal sin and the need for justification by faith.

(17)

But if, in our (Peter and Paul) endeavor to be justified in Christ, we (Peter and Paul) too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

## The Law Reveals Sin in Us but Not In Christ

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:18-21, ESV)

**6. However, if Paul were to return to the law, he would have not been justified by faith****(18)**

For if I (Paul) rebuild what I (Paul) tore down, I (Paul) prove myself to be a transgressor.

**Justification by the Law Reveals Sin**

But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” (Romans 2:17-24, ESV)

**7. because Paul died to the law at the cross of Christ****(19-20a)**

For through the law I (Paul) died to the law, so that I (Paul) might live to God.

I (Paul) have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I (Paul) who live, but Christ who lives in me (Paul).

**Baptism: Immersed into the Death and Resurrection of Christ to Live**

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:1-11, ESV)

**Marriage: Died to the Law to Be United to Christ**

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. (Romans 7:1-6, ESV)

**8. in order for Paul to live by faith in Christ.**

**(20b)**

And the life I (Paul) now live in the flesh I (Paul) live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me (Paul) and gave himself for me (Paul).

**Justification by Faith: Live by the Spirit**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:1-11, ESV)

**9. So, Paul, by rejecting justification by the law, did not also nullify justification by faith in Christ or otherwise, Christ's death would have been meaningless. (21)**

I (Paul) do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

**The Purpose of God: Justified by Faith in Christ**

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39, ESV)

**Argument for Justification by Faith**

***Peter and Paul were given the law as a promise of God's grace, but Peter and Paul were not justified by the law; rather, they were justified by faith in Christ, because no one, Jew or Gentile, will be justified by works of the law since the law will reveal sin and the need for justification by faith. However, if Paul were to return to the law, he would not have been justified by faith because he died to the law at the cross of Christ in order to live by faith in Christ. So, Paul, by rejecting justification by the law, did not also nullify justification by faith in Christ or otherwise, Christ's death would have been meaningless.***