

PETER #10 Peter's Regression (Gal. 2)

Galatians 2:9 – 14

- I. **Peter's Progress—the Case of Cornelius** (~40 AD; Acts 10-11)
 - A. Peter's vision on the roof while praying – Acts 10:10-16; 11:5-10
 - B. Peter resists the vision - Acts 10:14; 11:8
 - C. The Spirit's speaking to Peter – Acts 10:19-20; 11:12
 - D. Peter's obedience –God's action overcame Peter's resistance Acts 10:23-24
 - E. Peter deduced the vision's wider implications—it's not just about food, but people
 - F. God's New Testament move annulled key elements of Moses' Law
 - G. Peter resisted & rebutted criticism from Jerusalem's Circumcision Party (Acts. 11:1-18)
- II. **Peter's Regress—the Antioch Incident** (~50 AD; Gal. 2:11-14)
 - A. Originally Peter regularly ate with Gentile believers (2:12)
 - B. But when “men came from James,” Peter “drew back & separated” from Gentile believers (Gal. 2:12)
 - 1. Peter capitulated to the “circumcision party,” which he'd earlier resisted
 - 2. Peter's actions contradicted what God showed him in Acts 10-11
 - 3. Peter's behavior was contrary to the “*truth of the gospel*” (2:14)
 - 4. Peter was publicly rebuked by Paul (2:14-16)
- III. **Why Did Peter Regress?**
 - A. Not clear about the “*truth of the gospel*”
 - B. Not clear about the drastic change between the Old Covenant & the New Covenant
 - C. Distinguishing between Dispensations & Covenants—Four Key People:
 - 1. Abraham ~2000 BC-- God's Promises (Gen. 12)
 - 2. Moses ~1400 BC—the Old Covenant enacted with Israel (Ex. 20)
 - 3. Jeremiah ~600 BC— the New Covenant Promised (Jer. 31:31-34)
 - 4. Jesus Christ ~30 AD—the New Covenant Enacted (Luke 22:20; Mark 14:24)
 - D. Implications of Jesus' New Covenant (Heb. 8:13)
 - 1. Are we under the Old Covenant or the New Covenant?
 - 2. The New Covenant makes the Old Covenant obsolete, old, vanish away (Heb. 8:13)
 - 3. If we're not clear we might adopt Old Testament practices
 - 4. Are we progressing with God's forward move, or are we regressing?

PETER #10 Peter's Regression (Gal. 2) [Supp. Material]

Galatians 2:9 – 14

“When James & Cephas [Peter] & John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me [Paul], they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas & me, that we should go to the Gentiles & they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was [continually] eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he [Peter] drew back & separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?’ We ourselves are Jews by birth & not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (Galatians 2:9-21)

IV. Peter's Progress—the Case of Cornelius (~40 AD; Acts 10-11)

- A. Peter's vision on the roof while praying – Acts 10:10-16; 11:5-10
- B. Peter's resistance to the vision - Acts 10:14; 11:8
 1. The command to ‘kill & eat’ (Acts 10:13) made no sense to Peter, since it violated Jewish food laws. In the OT, “the LORD spoke to...Israel, saying, “These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals...Whatever parts the hoof & is cloven-footed & chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat...You shall *not* eat these: The camel, the rock badger, the hare (rabbit), & the pig...You shall not eat any of their flesh, & you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you’.” (Lev. 11:1-8). But now the heavenly voice said, “What God has cleansed, don't call common.” (Acts 10:15); this is the key: God was overturning the old clean/unclean distinctions & dietary laws in general, plus all other “ceremonial” laws in Moses' covenant (including laws about sacrifices, festivals & special days, & circumcision). Nothing like this was to get in the way of fellowship with Gentiles. ESV
 2. “It is important for the 21st-century reader to appreciate that the issue was not a minor matter of insignificant dietary fads. It lay at the heart of Jewish identity...Was the [Jesus' movement] loyal to the now traditionally distinctive features of the covenant people [God's OT people—the Jews]? ...Hitherto Peter...& believers in Jerusalem assumed the answer to be ‘Yes.’ But now Peter was faced with one of the most radical rethinks of religious principle imaginable.” [J. Dunn, *Beginning in Jerusalem*, p 393]
- C. The Spirit's speaking to Peter – Acts 10:19-20; 11:12
- D. Peter's obedience –God's action overcame Peter's resistance Acts 10:23-24
- E. Peter deduced the vision's wider implications—it's not just about food (diet), but people: Peter told Cornelius' guests, “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*. So when I was sent for, I came without objection...” (Acts 10:28-29) “The importance of the lesson just learned by Peter is drawn out clearly & should not be missed: not simply could he now eat ‘unclean’ *meat* with a good conscience, but he must not call any other *person* ‘unclean’. {“For most late 2nd-Temple Jews, Gentiles were not *ritually* impure, but [worse] *morally* impure; only a Jew could be holy (not profane/common)” [note 69]}” [J. Dunn, *Beginning in Jerusalem*, p. 394]
- F. Peter resisted & rebutted criticism of God's move from Jerusalem's Circumcision Party (Acts. 11:1-18)
 1. Peter criticized by traditional Christian Jews—“When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them’.” (Acts 11:2-3) **Note:** The issue was raised by “the circumcision party,” a group of strict Jewish Christians, perhaps of a Pharisaic background (Acts 15:1, 5). They likely held that Gentiles who wished to become Christians must first become converts to Judaism, which included circumcision & living by the ritual laws. ESV
 2. Peter related the story (Acts 11 repeats Acts 10)—“Don't blame me; it was all God's doing!”
 3. The Jerusalem critics accepted God's work among the Gentiles & glorified God.

V. **Peter's Regress—the Antioch Incident** (~50 AD; Galatians 2:11-14)

- C. Originally Peter regularly ate with Gentile believers (2:12)
1. Peter had been participating in meals where Jewish and Gentile Christians ate together... “*Eating with the Gentiles*” would mean not eating according to Jewish kosher dietary restrictions. ESV
 2. Consistent with what God showed Peter in Acts 10-11
- D. But when “certain men came from James” in Jerusalem, Peter “drew back & separated himself [from the Gentile believers], fearing the circumcision party.” (Gal. 2:12)
- Peter capitulated to the Jerusalem “circumcision party,” which he’d earlier resisted
 - One view is that the men *from James* (probably sent from the Jerusalem church by the apostle James) encouraged [Antioch’s] Jewish Christians to eat separately & follow kosher dietary laws. Peter went along with this, perhaps not realizing that his example made the Gentile Christians feel like 2nd-class citizens in the church unless they followed Jewish ceremonial laws (e.g., dietary laws, circumcision, holidays & festivals). Paul saw Peter’s behavior threatened the gospel...because it implied that all Christians had to “live like Jews” (Gal. 2:14) in order to be justified before God. ESV
- E. Peter’s actions
1. directly contradicted what God showed him in Acts 10-11
 2. were hypocritical—influenced by the presence/absence of “*men from James*” (2:13)
 3. influenced other Jewish Christians (incl. Barnabas) to join his hypocritical behavior (2:13)
 4. were contrary to the “*truth of the gospel*” (2:14)
 5. Peter was publicly rebuked by Paul (2:14-16)--“Paul had the boldness to rebuke Peter, demonstrating thereby that his gospel functioned as an authority over Peter. Hence, the... gospel was not just Paul’s personal opinion. It is the gospel in all times and in all places” (Schreiner).
 6. What was Peter’s response to Paul’s rebuke? Did Peter accept Paul’s rebuke & repent? Some scholars think not--“The Antioch incident as Paul narrates it is unconcluded. The result of [Paul’s] rebuke of Peter is not recorded, and **this must be because it was unsuccessful**...” [Richard Bauckham, “*Barnabas in Galatians*,” *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, 1979]

VI. **Why Did Peter Regress?**

- A. Peter not clear about the “*truth of the gospel*” (in contrast Paul got more clear)
- “The significance of Paul’s stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of ‘justification through faith’ applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer’s life...[Paul] saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God’s covenant promises...it must also regulate his life as a believer.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & the Law*, pp. 158-9]
 - Paul saw that the law-keeping of both “Judaism and of the Jewish believers (life in accordance with the law within the [old] covenant...) was in fact a contradiction of... justification through faith. To live life ‘in Christ’ **and** ‘in accordance with the law’ was not possible; it involved a basic contradiction in terms and in the understanding of what made someone acceptable to God.” [J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, p. 159]
 - “Paul’s emphatic teaching [was] that since God accepts the heathen as they are, circumcision, food avoidances, and ritual washings are not for them.... No group of Christians has therefore any right to impose upon another group of Christians as set of assumptions about life determined by another time and place.” [Andrew F. Walls, *The Gospel as Prisoner & Liberator of Culture*, in *The Missionary Movement on Christian History* p. 8]
 - Having believed in the Lord Jesus, how can we live a Christian life that’s approved by God? We’re **not** justified (in our living) by faith in Christ **plus works of law** (i.e., circumcision, kosher diet, Sabbath-keeping, tithing 10%, etc.) We’re justified in our living (Gal. 2:17) by faith in Christ (alone) – Jesus **plus nothing** equals Everything
- B. Not clear about the drastic change between the Old Covenant & the New Covenant; Peter was still influenced by Jewish Old Covenant concepts. Andrew F. Walls explains this concept:
- “It is not surprising that many Jerusalem believers took it for granted that the believing Greeks in Antioch and beyond should be treated as enlightened Gentiles had always been treated in Israel.... In addition to the baptism they had received (and there was in any case an established custom of baptizing proselytes), they should be circumcised and, being thus incorporated into Israel, keep the Torah [Law] as good

Israelites. After all, the Torah [Law] was Israel's most precious possession, given by God himself and marking Israel out from other nations— should not all followers of Israel's Messiah keep and cherish it?"

- But Paul adamantly opposed this concept. Prof. Walls continues: Galatians "reveals Paul's reaction to it. It is not just disagreement —it is white-hot indignation. His emotions are so strong as to strain his syntax... Paul will not allow it even as an option for people brought up as Hellenistic [Greek-speaking] pagans to adopt, on coming to Christ, the lifestyle of very good, devout, observant Jewish believers. ***The followers of Jesus are not proselytes. They are converts.***" [Andrew F. Walls, *Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church*, *INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH*, Vol. 28, No. 1, January, 2004, p. 5]

C. Distinguishing between Dispensations & Covenants—Four Key People:

- Abraham ~2000 BC-- God's Promises (Gen. 12)
 - God promised Abraham, "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:3)
 - The Gentiles' salvation in view: "Foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, [God] preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed'." (Gal. 3:8)
- Moses ~1400 BC—the Old Covenant enacted with Israel (Ex. 20)
 - "The Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and *with Israel*" (Ex. 34:27)
 - "These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make *with the people of Israel*..." (Deut. 29:1)
- Jeremiah ~600 BC— the New Covenant Promised (Jer. 31:31-33)
 - "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I'll make a new ...not like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them ...out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke... declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make ...after those days, declares the LORD: I'll put my law within them, & I'll write it on their hearts. I'll be their God, & they shall be my people. No longer shall each one teach his neighbor & each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they'll all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I'll forgive their iniquity, & I'll remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)
- Jesus Christ ~30 AD—the New Covenant Enacted
 - "This cup that is poured out for you is *the new covenant* in my blood" (Luke 22:20)
 - "This is my blood of *the covenant*, which is poured out for many." (Mark 14:24)
 - Who are the "many"? "The Son of Man... gave his life as a ransom *for many*" (Mark 10:45)
 - "God...desires all people to be saved...Christ gave himself a ransom *for all*..." (1 Tim. 2:4, 6)
 - "Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, & not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jn. 2:2)
 - "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (i.e., all people)" (Jn. 1:29)
 - "God so loved *the world* that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)
- Gentile believers included in the New Covenant on an equal basis with Jewish believers: Paul refers to "the mystery of Christ, which was not made known... in other generations as it's now been revealed ...by the Spirit. This mystery is that *the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, & partakers of the promise* in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Eph. 3:4-6)

E. Implications of Jesus' New Covenant

1. Are we under the Old Covenant or the New Covenant?
2. The New Covenant makes the Old Covenant obsolete, old, vanishing away (Heb. 8:13)
 - "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one [Moses' covenant] obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete & growing old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8:13) **Note:** The *new covenant* makes *the first one* old (Greek *palaioō*, here translated *obsolete*)—so old it's becoming like a person of extreme age (Gk *gēraskō*, here translated *growing old*) & thus is near to disappearing (*ready to vanish away*). ESV "The word [translated '*vanish away*' or '*disappearing*'] is suggestive of utter destruction & abolition." (Reinecker)
3. If we're not clear we might adopt Old Testament practices
4. Are we progressing with God's forward move, or are we regressing?

PETER #10 Peter's Regression (Gal. 2) [Script]

Galatians 2:9 – 14

“When James & Cephas [Peter] & John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me [Paul], they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas & me, that we should go to the Gentiles & they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was [continually] eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he [Peter] drew back & separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all, ‘If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?’ We ourselves are Jews by birth & not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (Galatians 2:9-21)

PIX: Peter Moving Forward title

PIX: Peter Bible Miniseries

PIX: Peter Vision Acts 10 title

PIX: Peter Vision Acts 10 1

PIX: Leviticus 11 Unclean Animals

PIX: Peter Acts 10 v34 No Favorites

VII. Peter's Progress—the Case of Cornelius (~40 AD; Acts 10-11)

G. Peter's vision on the roof while praying – Acts 10:10-16; 11:5-10

H. Peter's resistance to the vision - Acts 10:14; 11:8

3. The command to ‘kill & eat’ (Acts 10:13) made no sense to Peter, since it violated Jewish food laws. In the OT, “the LORD spoke to...Israel, saying, ‘These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals...Whatever parts the hoof & is cloven-footed & chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat...You shall *not* eat these: The camel, the rock badger, the hare (rabbit), & the pig...You shall not eat any of their flesh, & you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.’” (Lev. 11:1-8). But now the heavenly voice said, “What God has cleansed, don’t call common.” (Acts 10:15); this is the key: God was overturning the old clean/unclean distinctions & dietary laws in general, plus all other “ceremonial” laws in Moses’ covenant (including laws about sacrifices, festivals & special days, & circumcision). Nothing like this was to get in the way of fellowship with Gentiles. ESV
4. “It is important for the 21st-century reader to appreciate that the issue was not a minor matter of insignificant dietary fads. It lay at the heart of Jewish identity...Was the [Jesus’ movement] loyal to the now traditionally distinctive features of the covenant people [God’s OT people—the Jews]? ...Hitherto Peter...& believers in Jerusalem assumed the answer to be ‘Yes.’ But now Peter was faced

with one of the most radical rethinks of religious principle imaginable.” [J. Dunn, *Beginning in Jerusalem*, p 393]

- I. The Spirit’s speaking to Peter – Acts 10:19-20; 11:12
- J. Peter’s obedience –God’s action overcame Peter’s resistance Acts 10:23-24
- K. Peter deduced the vision’s wider implications—it’s not just about food (diet), but people: Peter told Cornelius’ guests, “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*. So when I was sent for, I came without objection...” (Acts 10:28-29) “The importance of the lesson just learned by Peter is drawn out clearly & should not be missed: not simply could he now eat ‘unclean’ *meat* with a good conscience, but he must not call any other *person* ‘unclean’. {“For most late 2nd-Temple Jews, Gentiles were not *ritually* impure, but [worse] *morally* impure; only a Jew could be holy (not profane/common)” [note 69]}” [J. Dunn, *Beginning in Jerusalem*, p. 394]
- L. Peter resisted & rebutted criticism of God’s move from Jerusalem’s Circumcision Party (Acts. 11:1-18)
 - 4. Peter criticized by traditional Christian Jews—“When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them’.” (Acts 11:2-3)
Note: The issue was raised by “the circumcision party,” a group of strict Jewish Christians, perhaps of a Pharisaic background (Acts 15:1, 5). They likely held that Gentiles who wished to become Christians must first become converts to Judaism, which included circumcision & living by the ritual laws. ESV
 - 5. Peter related the story (Acts 11 repeats Acts 10)—“Don’t blame me; it was all God’s doing!”
 - 6. The Jerusalem critics accepted God’s work among the Gentiles & glorified God.

VIII. **Peter’s Regress—the Antioch Incident** (~50 AD; Galatians 2:11-14)

PIX: Peter Bible Miniseries 1

PIX: Peter 2 Steps Forward 1 Step Back

PIX: Peter & Paul Rembrandt

- F. Originally Peter regularly ate with Gentile believers (2:12)
 - 3. Peter had been participating in meals where Jewish and Gentile Christians ate together...
“*Eating with the Gentiles*” would mean not eating according to Jewish kosher dietary restrictions. ESV
 - 4. Consistent with what God showed Peter in Acts 10-11
- G. But when “certain men came from James” in Jerusalem, Peter “drew back & separated himself [from the Gentile believers], fearing the circumcision party.” (Gal. 2:12)
 - Peter capitulated to the Jerusalem “circumcision party,” which he’d earlier resisted
 - One view is that the men *from James* (probably sent from the Jerusalem church by the apostle James) encouraged [Antioch’s] Jewish Christians to eat separately & follow kosher dietary laws. Peter went along with this, perhaps not realizing that his example made the Gentile Christians feel like 2nd-class citizens in the church unless they followed Jewish ceremonial laws (e.g., dietary laws, circumcision, holidays & festivals). Paul saw Peter’s behavior threatened the gospel...because it implied that all Christians had to “live like Jews” (Gal. 2:14) in order to be justified before God. ESV
- H. Peter’s actions
 - 7. directly contradicted what God showed him in Acts 10-11
 - 8. were hypocritical—influenced by the presence/absence of “*men from James*” (2:13)

9. influenced other Jewish Christians (incl. Barnabas) to join his hypocritical behavior (2:13)
10. were contrary to the “*truth of the gospel*” (2:14)
11. Peter was publicly rebuked by Paul (2:14-16)--“Paul had the boldness to rebuke Peter, demonstrating thereby that his gospel functioned as an authority over Peter. Hence, the... gospel was not just Paul’s personal opinion. It is the gospel in all times and in all places” (Schreiner).
12. What was Peter’s response to Paul’s rebuke? Did Peter accept Paul’s rebuke & repent? Some scholars think not--“The Antioch incident as Paul narrates it is unconcluded. The result of [Paul’s] rebuke of Peter is not recorded, and **this must be because it was unsuccessful...**” [Richard Bauckham, “*Barnabas in Galatians*,” *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, 1979]

IX. Why Did Peter Regress?

- D. Peter not clear about the “*truth of the gospel*” (in contrast Paul got more clear)
 - “The significance of Paul’s stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of ‘justification through faith’ applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer’s life...[Paul] saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God’s covenant promises...it must also regulate his life as a believer.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & the Law*, pp. 158-9]
 - Paul saw that the law-keeping of both “Judaism and of the Jewish believers (life in accordance with the law within the [old] covenant...) was in fact a contradiction of... justification through faith. To live life ‘in Christ’ **and** ‘in accordance with the law’ was not possible; it involved a basic contradiction in terms and in the understanding of what made someone acceptable to God.” [J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, p. 159]
 - “Paul’s emphatic teaching [was] that since God accepts the heathen as they are, circumcision, food avoidances, and ritual washings are not for them.... No group of Christians has therefore any right to impose upon another group of Christians as set of assumptions about life determined by another time and place.” [Andrew F. Walls, *The Gospel as Prisoner & Liberator of Culture*, in *The Missionary Movement on Christian History* p. 8]
 - Having believed in the Lord Jesus, how can we live a Christian life that’s approved by God? We’re **not** justified (in our living) by faith in Christ **plus** works of law (i.e., circumcision, kosher diet, Sabbath-keeping, tithing 10%, etc.) We’re justified in our living (Gal. 2:17) by faith in Christ (alone) – Jesus **plus nothing** equals Everything
- E. Not clear about the drastic change between the Old Covenant & the New Covenant; Peter was still influenced by Jewish Old Covenant concepts. Andrew F. Walls explains this concept:
 - “It is not surprising that many Jerusalem believers took it for granted that the believing Greeks in Antioch and beyond should be treated as enlightened Gentiles had always been treated in Israel.... In addition to the baptism they had received (and there was in any case an established custom of baptizing proselytes), they should be circumcised and, being thus incorporated into Israel, keep the Torah [Law] as good Israelites. After all, the Torah [Law] was Israel’s most precious possession, given by God himself and marking Israel out from other nations— should not all followers of Israel’s Messiah keep and cherish it?”
 - But Paul adamantly opposed this concept. Prof. Walls continues: Galatians “reveals Paul’s reaction to it. It is not just disagreement—it is white-hot indignation. His emotions are so strong as to strain his syntax... Paul will not allow it even as an option for people brought up as

Hellenistic [Greek-speaking] pagans to adopt, on coming to Christ, the lifestyle of very good, devout, observant Jewish believers. ***The followers of Jesus are not proselytes. They are converts.***” [Andrew F. Walls, *Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church*, *INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH*, Vol. 28, No. 1, January, 2004, p. 5]

F. Distinguishing between Dispensations & Covenants—Four Key People:

- **Abraham ~2000 BC--** God’s Promises (Gen. 12)
 - **PIX: Bible Miniseries Abraham & Sarah**
 - God promised Abraham, “...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3)
 - The Gentiles’ salvation in view: “Foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, [God] preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’.” (Gal. 3:8)
- **Moses ~1400 BC—the Old Covenant enacted with Israel (Ex. 20)**
 - **PIX: Bible Miniseries Moses**
 - **PIX: Exodus Israel at Sinai**
 - **PIX: Exodus 20 10 Commandments**
 - **PIX: Peter OT 613 Laws**
 - **PIX: Peter OT 613 Laws 1**
 - **PIX: Israel Land of Israel**
 - “The Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and *with Israel*” (Ex. 34:27)
 - “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make *with the people of Israel*...” (Deut. 29:1)
- **Jeremiah ~600 BC—the New Covenant Promised (Jer. 31:31-33)**
 - **PIX: Jeremiah**
 - “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I’ll make a new ...not like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them ...out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke... declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make ...after those days, declares the LORD: I’ll put my law within them, & I’ll write it on their hearts. I’ll be their God, & they shall be my people. No longer shall each one teach his neighbor & each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they’ll all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I’ll forgive their iniquity, & I’ll remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34)
- **Jesus Christ ~30 AD—the New Covenant Enacted**
- **PIX: Peter Jesus Christ title**
- **PIX: Peter New Covenant**
 - “This cup that is poured out for you is *the new covenant* in my blood” (Luke 22:20)
 - “This is my blood of *the covenant*, which is poured out for many.” (Mark 14:24)
 - Who are the “many”? “The Son of Man... gave his life as a ransom *for many*” (Mark 10:45)
 - “God...desires all people to be saved...Christ gave himself a ransom *for all*...” (1 Tim. 2:4, 6)

- “Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, & not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 Jn. 2:2)
- “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (all people)” (Jn. 1:29)
- “God so loved *the world* that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)
- Gentile believers included in the New Covenant on an equal basis with Jewish believers: Paul refers to “the mystery of Christ, which was not made known... in other generations as it’s now been revealed ...by the Spirit. This mystery is that *the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, & partakers of the promise* in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph. 3:4-6)

F. Implications of Jesus’ New Covenant

5. Are we under the Old Covenant or the New Covenant?

- **PIX: Lev Christians Keep Sabbath**
- **PIX: Lev Egypt Coptic Orthodox Robes**
- **PIX: Lev Church of England Bishops Robes**
- **PIX: Peter High Church Altar Robes**
- **PIX: Lev Church Bishop Burns Incense**
- **PIX: Hebrews Turn Back Clock**
- **PIX: Peter New Covenant title 1**

6. The New Covenant makes the Old Covenant obsolete, old, vanishing away (Heb. 8:13)
 - “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one [Moses’ covenant] obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete & growing old is ready to vanish away.” (Heb. 8:13)
Note: The *new covenant* makes *the first one* old (Greek *palaioō*, here translated *obsolete*)—so old it’s becoming like a person of extreme age (Gk *gēraskō*, here translated *growing old*) & thus is near to disappearing (*ready to vanish away*). ESV “The word [translated ‘*vanish away*’ or ‘*disappearing*’] is suggestive of utter destruction & abolition.” (Reinecker)
7. If we’re not clear we might adopt Old Testament practices
8. Are we progressing with God’s forward move, or are we regressing?

Main Idea

“The central idea here is that Paul had the boldness to rebuke Peter, demonstrating thereby that his gospel functioned as an authority over Peter. Hence, the... gospel was not just Paul’s personal opinion. It is the gospel in all times and in all places” (Schreiner).

Every preacher, teacher and church leader is to submit to the gospel message. No human being has authority over the gospel. The gospel has authority over all people.

The following statement on the *Literary Context* taken from Thomas Schreiner’s commentary on Galatians is an excellent review of Galatians up to this point in our study (p. 135).

“The argument for the independence and authority of the Pauline gospel continues. Paul’s gospel was not received from human beings but given to him via a revelation of Jesus Christ (1:11 – 12). Paul’s conversion and calling support the thesis that his gospel was given to him by God himself, for the only explanation for his change from persecutor to proclaimer of the gospel was the supernatural appearance of Christ on the Damascus road (1:11 – 17). Paul could not have derived his gospel from Peter, for he did not see him until 3 years after his conversion, and even then spent only 2 weeks with him (1:18 – 20). Nor did he receive it from the churches of Judea, for they did not even know Paul face-to-face (1:21 – 24). When the Jerusalem leaders heard the Pauline gospel 14 years after his conversion, they did not demand the circumcision of Titus, nor did they add anything to Paul’s gospel (2:1 – 10). Instead, they agreed his gospel was truly from God.

In the present paragraph (2:11 – 14), the narrative continues...and Paul vindicates further the independence of his gospel in his rebuke of Peter. Not only did the Jerusalem leaders ratify [Paul’s] gospel (2:1 – 10), but his gospel stands as an authority over these apostles when they depart from it. Paul’s independence from Jerusalem and his authority are reflected in his rebuke of Peter when the latter failed to live in accord with the truth of the gospel. Thus, Paul’s gospel is authoritative not only in Galatia, but everywhere – even in Jerusalem.”

Antioch

- The Antioch that is referred to in 2:11 is Syrian Antioch, not Pisidian Antioch that is located in Asia Minor. Antioch had a total population of 250,000. The Jewish population was around 25,000. Obviously the majority of people living in Antioch were Gentile.

- Believers were first called “Christians” in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

- Paul’s headquarters for operations was in Antioch.

Verse 11. Note Paul’s strong language; “I opposed him [Peter] to his face, because he stood condemned.” We can see Paul’s extraordinary zeal for the purity of the gospel. Oh that God would work such a zeal for the gospel in the hearts of preachers today. The gospel message is sure worth our whole-hearted defense. This message originated in the mind of Almighty God and cost Jesus Christ His very life.

Verse 12. “he [Peter] was eating with the Gentiles.” From the Maccabean period onward (starting around 165 BC), the boundary markers of Judaism, which were most important, were the following three: **circumcision**, **Sabbath**, and **food laws**. The Hellenizing movement attempted to suppress these Jewish distinctives, and those who observed the law were often persecuted (Schreiner). This would explain the concern, even fear, over dietary practices.

Verse 13. Peter was not motivated by his convictions, rather he “drew back” and “separated himself” out of fear. Peter had failed to guard (as a shepherd) the Gentiles and their gospel freedom.

- Note how others were influenced by Peter’s hypocrisy.

Verse 14. From Schreiner: “If Peter would only eat with Gentiles on the condition that they observed the food laws, he was saying in effect that they were not true believers unless they observed the purity laws. Hence, he was deviating, ‘not walking straight’...with reference to the truth of the gospel. And since Peter’s sin was public in nature, it was necessary for Paul to correct him in the presence of all, and therefore he did so openly.”

“The Antioch incident as Paul narrates it is unconcluded. The result of [Paul’s] rebuke of Peter is not recorded, and **this must be because it was unsuccessful...**” [R. Bauckham, “*Barnabas in Galatians*,” *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, 1979]

God changed His way of Dealing with People—a Radical Change in Covenants & Dispensations—from the Old Covenant to New Covenant

Jesus’ incarnation, death & resurrection fundamentally changed God’s relationship with mankind

- From the era of promise to fulfillment;
- from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.
- from the Old Testament to the New Testament
- But most of early Jewish disciples (incl. Peter) weren’t clear

Abraham ~2000 BC:

God promised Abraham, “...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3)

God had the Gentiles’ future salvation in view: “Foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, [God] preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’.” (Gal. 3:8)

Moses: ~1400 BC. Old Covenant: Before Christ God had a special, exclusive relationship with Israel (the Jews). They were God’s covenant people benefitting from God’s blessings & promises—the Promised Land of Israel, sovereignty (independence, security, peace & ruling over other nations), relationship with God (place—Jerusalem for access to God, & God’s presence), etc. God was the God of Israel & not of other (Gentile) nations. All this was conditional on Israel’s keeping the covenant—the 10 Commandments plus other rules & regulations (some of those regulations were designed to separate Israel from other nations (Sabbath, diet, circumcision, no inter-marriage, no idols, etc))

Note: The Old Covenant (10 Commandments, etc given to Moses at Mt. Sinai) is a covenant between the God Israel & the nation of Israel (the Jews). It’s *not* a Covenant with us (Gentiles, NT believers). If you’re a Jew (physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob) you had/have the right to return & reside in Israel & claim those blessings

Jeremiah ~600 BC God promised a future “New Covenant” (Jer. 31:31-34)

Jesus Christ ~30 AD enacted the New Covenant—

- “This cup that is poured out for you is *the new covenant* in my blood” (Luke 22:20)
- “This is my blood of *the covenant*, which is poured out for many.” (Mark 14:24)

- Who are the “many”? “The Son of Man... gave his life as a ransom *for many*” (Mark 10:45)
- “God...desires all people to be saved...Christ Jesus gave himself as a ransom *for all*...” (1 Tim. 2:4, 6)
- “Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, & not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 Jn 2:2)
- “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (i.e., all people)” (Jn 1:29)
- “God so loved *the world* that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)

The scope of the New Covenant—is all those who believe/receive (whether Jews or Gentiles, etc)

GALATIANS Called to Freedom: #6 FAITH Vs. FEAR

Acts 10:1-11:18; Galatians 2:11-21

I. Radical Change in Covenants & Dispensations—Old Covenant to New Covenant

Jesus’ incarnation, death & resurrection fundamentally changed God’s relationship with mankind (especially the Jews)--From the era of promise to fulfillment; from the OT to the NT; from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. But most of early Jewish disciples weren’t clear.

1. Typical Jewish Believers’ Concept—

- Jesus is the promised Messiah; I’m a “completed Jew”—Jews for Jesus
- The Old Covenant still applies—God wants us (Jews) to be circumcised, eat kosher, keep Sabbath, etc. We are Israel, God’s chosen nation, His ethnic, racial, religious people.
- God accepts Gentiles who believe Jesus is the Messiah; they join us as proselytes

2. Paul’s View—

- There’s a New Covenant (replacing the Old), a new dispensation.
- God’s “narrow/ exclusive focus” on the Jewish nation (an “experimental group”) is over. God has reverted back to His original promise to Abraham to bless all nations—it’s inclusive.
- The ordinances, marks of Jewish identity, which distinguished (segregated) Jews from the Gentiles are over. To be circumcised, eat kosher, keep the Sabbath, etc are now matters of indifference to God (food doesn’t commend us to God). They are now merely cultural issues (neutral as far as God is concerned—e.g. kosher food, days/Sabbath don’t commend us to God). Only faith in Jesus counts!
- We’ve entered a new stage- the “caterpillar” has become a “butterfly” (left “cocoon” behind)

II. God’s Offer of Salvation to the Gentiles (non-Jews)

1. Promised to Abraham (~2,000 BC) --“...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3)
 “Foreseeing God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’.” (Gal. 3:8)

2. Jesus' resurrection charge (~ AD 30)—“disciple all nations” (Matt. 28:19) “repentance & forgiveness should be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:47)

3. Revealed to Paul at his conversion (~AD 33) —“a chosen instrument ...to carry My name before the Gentiles...” (Acts 9:15) “He said, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles’.” (Acts 22:21) “The Gentiles — to whom I am sending you” (Acts 26:17) God “revealed his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles” (Gal. 1:16)

4. Revealed to Peter (~AD 38)--Vision of Clean & Unclean Foods & People (Acts 10:9-16)

a. Cornelius told to summon Peter—“At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion... An angel said to him, ‘Your prayers & your alms have ascended ...before God. Now send men to Joppa & bring one Simon, called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea’.” (Acts 10:1-6)

b. Peter's Vision—“The next day...Peter was on the housetop ...he fell into a trance and saw ...a great sheet descending, being let down by its 4 corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles & birds. Then a voice told him: ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” The voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” This happened 3 times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.” (Acts 10:9-16)

c. Peter told to go with Cornelius' men--“while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said “Behold, 3 men are looking for you. Rise, go down & accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.” (Acts 10:19-20)

d. Peter preaches—“Peter went in & found many persons gathered. 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....” (Acts 10:27-29) [**ESV Note:** “*unlawful*”—in the sense of not following the customs of strict Jewish traditions about uncleanness. The Jewish traditions of purity made it virtually impossible for Jews to associate with Gentiles without becoming ritually unclean. “*God has shown me*” refers to the vision of 10:10-16. This shows Peter understood his vision.]

“Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone... is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent ...preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)... all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” (Acts 10:34-43)

e. The Gentile Pentecost—“While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised ...were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. They were hearing the Gentiles speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ‘Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 10:44-48) [**ESV Note:** These Gentiles had come to genuine saving faith in Christ and had received the ...fullness of the Holy Spirit, which was a sign that they had been accepted by God as full & equal members of his people. The fact that they had not followed any Mosaic ceremonial laws (e.g., concerning circumcision, sacrifice, & dietary restrictions) before receiving the gift of the Spirit is an important point...]

f. Critics from the “circumcision party”—“Now the apostles & the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” But Peter began and explained it to them in order:If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life’.” (Acts 11:1-18)

[**ESV Note:** The fact that the Spirit came to Cornelius & other Gentiles without them having done anything in relationship to the OT Law is God's answer to the debate and settled matters as far as Peter was concerned.]

g. **“The Circumcision party”** Lit. “those of the circumcision” (Acts 11:2; 15:5; Gal. 2:12; Titus 1:10)

III. Paul Confronts Peter--The Antioch Incident (~AD 48; Gal. 2:11-21)

No classic painting of this incident—because people didn't know how to handle “Saint Paul” vs. “Saint Peter”

1. **Paul Opposes Peter**—“But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he [Peter] was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back & separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (2:11-14)

a. Paul not a “man-pleaser” **ESV Note:** Paul said he was not a people-pleaser (1:10); his confrontation with Peter here bears that out. It is unclear when Paul's speech to Peter stops and his direct address to the Galatians begins again, but 2:15-16 (“We ourselves are Jews by birth”) was surely addressed to Peter.

b. Peter regularly ate with the Gentiles

- Peter regularly participating in meals with Gentile Christians --“he continually ate”—imperfect tense, denoting a habitual action) where Jewish & Gentile Christians ate together—a “pot luck lunch.”
- Peter's *eating with the Gentiles* would mean not eating according to Jewish dietary restrictions.
- Peter's associated with Gentile believers—“Gentile Sinners,” following his vision & actions at Cornelius' house (Acts 10-11). Initially when he was in Antioch, Peter obeyed & applied that vision (Acts 10)
- Opposed by *the circumcision party*. They advocated following the ceremonies of Moses' covenant law regarding circumcision, food & special days [Sabbath, feasts, etc.] The Jewish diet was “the thin end of the wedge,” adopting one OT Jewish ordinance would eventually lead to adopting them all--proselytes.

c. Peter's actions disassociating from Gentile believers (followed by other Jewish believers)

- Peter regularly participated in meals with Gentile believers, but then he *drew back & separated himself*, eating only with Jewish Christians
- Motivated by fear—“fearing [Greek: phobos--phobia] the circumcision party” “The fear of man is a snare...” (Prov. 29:25) One view--the men *from James* (probably sent from the Jerusalem church by the apostle James) encouraged Jewish Christians to eat separately & follow kosher dietary laws.
- **FAITH vs. FEAR**—Don't just judge/ condemn Peter. How often do you & I do/ not do something because of the fear of man—what will people think/say? Will people lose respect for me? Will they call me “a fool”?—That's FEAR of man! You may have some feeling from Christ—then follow it by FAITH (Paul: “I live by faith in the Son of God”) At High School/ college/ university you may have feeling to join a Christian club, be associated with other Christians—then follow by FAITH. If you start thinking—what will people (the ‘cool crowd’) think/ say if I join those ‘weird people’—then that's FEAR, a snare.

d. The effects of Peter's actions:

- One view is that the men from James encouraged Jewish Christians to eat separately & follow kosher dietary laws. Peter decided to go along with this—Did Peter think-- “how will my eating with Gentiles affect my status, reputation, influence back in Jerusalem/ Judea, what about my ministry?”
- Peter’s example made the Gentile Christians feel like second-class citizens in the church unless they followed Jewish ceremonial laws (e.g. diet, circumcision, Sabbath & festivals). Peter was the leading apostle—his actions conveyed the message—unless you Gentile believers adopt Jewish practices you won’t be accepted by me on an equal basis as Jewish believers. You’re not fully accepted among God’s people unless you become a proselyte.
- But—“the ground before the cross is level.” This adds to the gospel—it’s Jesus plus (Jewish diet)

2. Paul’s View: “We ourselves are Jews by birth & not ‘Gentile sinners’; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ & not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (2:15-21)

3. Justification by Faith “Justified” means “counted righteous” or “declared righteous” by God—you’re OK

Justified by faith in Christ--“faith in Jesus Christ” is synonymous with the next phrase, “we also have believed in Christ Jesus.” “But through faith in Jesus Christ” is the opposite of depending on one’s own good deeds for justification, since justification comes through faith in Christ alone.

Gal. 2:16 frequently appealed to in the 1500s Reformation by Protestants [e.g. Luther] insist on “justification by faith alone” Vs the Roman Catholic justification by faith plus merit gained through the “means of grace” administered by the Catholic sacraments-- penance & Mass.) Paul *by works of the law no one will be justified*

“Romans proves that a sinner cannot be justified by the works of law. Galatians proves that a believer cannot be sanctified by the works of law. We are both justified by faith and sanctified by faith. If we have begun by the Spirit, how can we be perfected by the flesh? In any case ...those who are of faith are blessed together with believing Abraham.” [W. Nee, *Questions on the Gospel*, Chap. 40]

4. The Importance of the Antioch Incident

“The significance of Paul’s stand should not be underestimated. For the first time, probably, he had come to see that the principle of ‘justification through faith’ applied not simply to the acceptance of the gospel in conversion, but also to the whole of the believer’s life...[Paul] saw that justification through faith was not simply a statement of how the believer entered into God’s covenant promises..it must also regulate his life as a believer.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & the Law*, pp. 158-9]

Paul saw that the law-keeping of both “Judaism and of the Jewish believers (life in accordance with the law within the [old] covenant given by grace) was in fact a contradiction of... justification through faith. To live life ‘in Christ’ **and** ‘in accordance with the law’ was not possible; it involved a basic contradiction in terms and in the understanding of what made someone acceptable to God.” [James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & Law*, p. 159]

“The Antioch incident convinced Paul that... justification through faith must determine the **whole** of life and not only the starting point of discovering (or being discovered by) God’s grace. Consequently, it is precisely in

Galatians that we find the strongest assertion that righteousness is a hope still to be realized (Gal. 5:5).” [James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul & the Law*, p. 162] “For through the Spirit, by faith, *we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.*” (Gal. 5:5)

Found to be sinners. Paul has just said the Gentiles are known as “sinners” (v. 15). When Jewish Christians associate with them, they’re liable to the charge from traditional Jews of becoming “sinners” themselves. Paul was saying—Peter when you followed the Lord’s leading (by faith) you ate with the Gentile believers. Now some Jewish believers came from James—you’re found to be a “sinner” by them; it looks like the Lord led you into sin. But is Christ a servant/minister of sin? No!

“If I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.” Peter you rebuilt the separating wall between Jewish & Gentile believers! You’re a “transgressor”—either your eating with gentiles was a sin (transgression) or your separating from them is a sin—either way Peter you’re a transgressor!

5. Faith vs. Works of Law (Gal. 2:19-20)

- We’re not justified by faith in Christ **plus works of law** (i.e., circumcision, kosher diet, Sabbath-keeping, tithing 10%, etc.) With Christ’s resurrection these become culturally relative items.
- We’re not justified by faith in Christ (alone) – **Jesus plus nothing equals Everything**

Paul was telling Peter--either you live by the Law (Jewish separating ordinances) or you live by faith in Christ. Following Christ by faith you’ll eat with (accept) all kinds of believers (Gentile & Jewish). If you follow the Law (applying the Jewish separating ordinance—diet, table fellowship, Sabbath, circumcision, etc) then you’ll be separated from Gentile believers. The two principles of living contradict, they’re irreconcilable.

Paul, what about me? “I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave himself for me...” (Gal. 2:19-20)

“The later church has seen many heresies come and go, but the earliest of them has been by far the most persistent ... ‘Judaizing’ ... [i.e.,] the insistence on imposing our own religious culture, our own Torah [Law] and circumcision. [But] Christian conversion as demonstrated in the New Testament is not about [making someone a]...proselyte.” [Andrew F. Walls, *Converts or Proselytes? The Conversion Crisis in the Early Church*, INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, Vol. 28, No. 1, Jan., 2004, pp. 2-6]

"Paul's emphatic teaching [was] that since God accepts the heathen as they are, circumcision, food avoidances, and ritual washings are not for them.... No group of Christians has therefore any right to impose upon another group of Christians as set of assumptions about life determined by another time and place." [Andrew F. Walls, *The Gospel as Prisoner & Liberator of Culture*, in *The Missionary Movement on Christian History* p. 8]

In the context of Galatians/ Acts "No group of Christians [Jewish Christians in/from Jerusalem] has therefore any right to impose upon another group of Christians [Gentile believers] as set of assumptions [circumcision, diet, etc] about life determined by another time and place."

"It is not surprising that many Jerusalem believers took it for granted that the believing Greeks in Antioch and beyond should be treated as enlightened Gentiles had always been treated in Israel.... In addition to the baptism they had received (and there was in any case an established custom of baptizing proselytes), they should be circumcised and, being thus incorporated into Israel, keep the Torah [Law] as good Israelites. After

all, the Torah [Law] was Israel's most precious possession, given by God himself and marking Israel out from other nations— should not all followers of Israel's Messiah keep and cherish it?

And what greater gift or blessing could these newly adopted Israelites receive? If circumcision was the mark of the covenant, should not those newly brought within the covenant carry that mark? The only way of life known to the earliest believers in Jesus—the only known Christian lifestyle, to use an anachronism—was that of pious, observant Jews. It was the way of life sanctified by the Messiah himself, maintained by his closest disciples (Peter had never eaten anything common or unclean), and outstandingly patterned by the brother [James] who had grown up in the same home as the Messiah. It is not surprising that many Jerusalem believers evidently thought on these lines. Nor is it too surprising that numbers of new Gentile believers were ready to go along with the argument. Some of them had doubtless attended the synagogue for many years, convinced that Israel's God was indeed God, keeping, perhaps, such parts of the Torah [Law] as they could manage, but holding back from the irrevocable step of circumcision. Now that they knew Jesus Messiah, might this be the time to take on the whole yoke of God?

The opening of the Epistle to the Galatians, the source that reveals that some Gentile believers found the argument for Torah [Law] and circumcision attractive, also reveals Paul's reaction to it. It is not just disagreement—it is white-hot indignation. His emotions are so strong as to strain his syntax, and his language becomes so robust that some English versions translate rather coyly. Paul will not allow it even as an option for people brought up as Hellenistic [Greek-speaking] pagans to adopt, on coming to Christ, the lifestyle of very good, devout, observant Jewish believers. ***The followers of Jesus are not proselytes. They are converts.*** This was no unilateral decision of Paul's, though it is he who builds on it a whole understanding of Christian justification, first in Galatians and later in Romans. We are assured in Acts 15 that it reflected the mature decision of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, and the specific advice of James and of Peter. It marked the church's first critical departure from Jewish tradition and experience. **It built cultural diversity into the church forever.**

What is more, it gave rise to situations that were open-ended and unpredictable....If the council had decided to retain the long-standing proselyte model and require the new believers to live under the same regime as the original believers in Jesus. It is safe to say that huge areas of Hellenistic social, family, and intellectual life would have been left untouched by Christian faith. Whole stretches of Paul's letters would have been unnecessary. Consider, for instance, the passage in which Paul discusses what a Christian should do if invited to dinner by a pagan friend who may have bought the meat from a temple where it had been offered in pagan sacrifice (1 Cor. 10:27–30). This was an entirely new problem for believers. No apostle or elder, however experienced, had had to face it, because they were all observant Jews, and everyone knew that observant Jews did not sit at pagan dinner tables. Had Corinthian believers become proselytes and adopted the Jerusalem church lifestyle, there would have been no problem; the invitation would not be extended, or would be refused if it were. But Paul envisages a new sort of Christian lifestyle, where believers do join pagans at the dinner table and have to face the implications of acting, thinking, and speaking as Christians in that situation, speaking of Christ, perhaps at a pagan friend's table. He envisages Hellenistic Christians operating within Hellenistic social and family life, challenging and disturbing it, bringing about radical change in it—but from the inside, as a result of Christians expressing the implications of their faith within that society's institutions. " [Andrew F. Walls, *Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church*, *INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH*, Vol. 28, No. 1, January, 2004, p. 5]