

Galatians 2:15

- *“We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,”*
- This is an extremely dispensational verse that needs to be understood. If you look at the verse the use of the word “we” will determine who Paul is talking about throughout the rest of the passage.
- Paul clearly identifies the “we” as those who are Jews by nature. Consequently, throughout the rest of the chapter when Paul uses the pronoun “we” he is including himself with Israel. As a result, it is clear that there are two different groups of people in verse 15, those who were Jews by nature and those who were sinners of the gentiles.
- Was there every a time in Biblical history when the Jews were not considered sinners like the gentiles?
 - Ephesians 2:11-12—in time past Israel possessed a favored standing before God.
 - Romans 1:24-28—God gave the gentiles over to a reprobate sinful mind. Historically this took place at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. In the next chapter, God calls Abram and begins to make promises to him and his descendants.
 - Genesis 12:3—one of the promises that God made to Abram was that if any gentile wanted to be blessed they would have to bless Abram’s descendants.
- In time past God did not consider the Jews sinners in the same sense as the gentiles.
 - Matthew 15:21-28—the only way a gentile could receive blessing in time past was to recognize her place dispensationally, a gentile dog.
 - Romans 3:9, 23—historically this is not a conclusion that could have been reached before the writing of Paul.
- During the dispensation of Grace the Jews are not considered sinners along with the gentiles.

Galatians 2:16

- *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*
- In this verse we have one of the clearest statements in the word of God that justification does not come through works.

- Romans 3:19-20—all the law can do is manifest sin.
 - Romans 7:7
 - I Timothy 1:6-10—the purpose of the law is to manifest sin. When we believe the gospel the purpose of the Law is over. It has caused us to realize our own sin and reach out in faith to a redeemer who paid the price for us.
 - Romans 3:28—the only way a man can be justified today is by faith in the finished word of Christ on the cross of Calvary.
- Notice in the verse that we are justified by “*the faith of Christ.*” This is not talking about our faith in Christ. Rather it is talking about the faithfulness of Christ. It is speaking about Christ’s faithfulness to do what he said he would do.
 - The following is a quotation from C.R. Stam’s *Commentary on Galatians*, regarding the difference between objective and subjective faith.
 - The Scriptures speak of faith in two ways: objectively and subjectively. Objectively, faith is simple trust in another, or in what another has said or done; it moves toward an object—it is the character which constitutes one worthy of trust. Objectively, faith is associated with what one does; he believes in another. Subjectively, it is a quality one possesses: fidelity, dependability, worthiness to be believed in. Thus, if I have faith in you, you had better keep faith with me or I can no longer trust you. . . . Abraham is called faithful because he believed God implicitly (Gal. 3:6,9). He was faith-full abounding in faith toward God. But on the other hand, God is called faithful, not because He believes in others, but because He is true to his word. Thus we many believe what He says, because “He is faithful that promised” (Heb. 10:23) Abraham is called “faithful” in the objective sense; God is called faithful in the subjective sense.(Page 126-127)
- Romans 3:22
 - “*even we have believed in Jesus Christ.*”
 - In this portion of the verse we the faith of Paul objectively placed in Christ.
 - “*that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*”
 - A person gets justified on the basis of Christ’s faithfulness instead of on the basis of the works of the law.
 - Do you see what people are saying to when they insist on including works for salvation? They are saying that Christ is not faithful, that Christ did not do enough and is not worthy to be believed.
 - Just in case we missed the point Paul summarizes it for us at the end of the verse, no flesh is going to be justified by performing the works of the law.

Galatians 2:17

- *“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.”*
- Paul just got done saying in verse 16 that our works cannot save us. Consequently, the only way left for us to be saved is by Christ.
- What is the first thing you have to admit if you want to be justified by Christ? That you are a sinner and your works are worth nothing when it comes to our eternal salvation.
- So because you have to admit you’re a sinner in order to be justified does that mean that Christ is the originator of sin? God forbid. Absolutely Not.
- Notice again the use of the word “we” in verse 17. Remember that Paul is including himself with Israel in this statement. Therefore, Paul is saying that in order for a Jew to be justified he must no recognize that he is no better than a gentile.

Galatians 2:18

- *“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.”*
- What Peter had done in withdrawing his fellowship from the gentiles was in effect rebuild the middle wall of partition that Paul had worked so hard to tear down.
- Ephesians 2:14—we know that through the message and preaching of Paul Christ had already broken down the middle wall of partition.
- Paul says here that if he goes back to building a wall of law keeping and differences between Jews and Gentiles he himself is a transgressor.
- Galatians 1:8-9—remember Paul’s strong words to anyone who was preaching another gospel.
- If Paul were building this wall back up, He would have been condemned by the words out of his own mouth.