

GALATIANS

2:12-21 | STUDY GUIDE

GALATIANS 2:12, "For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party." (ESV)

- Paul doesn't name names, but he makes clear who has been influencing Peter
 - Fellowship and sharing meals was extremely important culturally
 - Ancient historians (such as Josephus) document a more tolerant attitude toward Jews in Antioch than Jerusalem
 - Peter would have likely been navigating around "important" Jews in his congregation and was attempting to maintain peace

GALATIANS 2:13, "And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy." (ESV)

- NOTE: "even" Barnabas
 - Paul has relational equity with Barnabas
 - He is indebted to Barnabas for much of his ministry
 - Barnabas welcomed him when others in Jerusalem didn't (Acts 9:27)
 - Barnabas sought him out for Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)
 - Barnabas accompanied him on his first mission trip (Acts 13:2)
- We often want to pick sides
 - Instead, ask, "why is Paul referring to this disagreement?"

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GALATIANS 2:14, "But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas 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?" (ESV)

- The hypocrisy has been made to seem innocent—just a way of preserving peace
 - It's about more than being inclusive
 - It's a theological compromise

GALATIANS 2:15, "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners..." (ESV)

- "Gentile sinners" seems strong
- Paul is making a very important theological point
 - "For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor." (2:18)
 - Essentially: we as Jews know more than anyone that we can't live up to God's holiness.

GALATIANS 2:19, "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God." (ESV)

- "I died to the law"
 - The Law is proof that we are flawed and fallen
 - The Law did not die—we did
 - "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." (2:20)

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GALATIANS 2:21, "...if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."

- Paul's final point is irrefutable
 - Imagine Peter wrestling with this concept
 - This isn't a "gotcha" or "I win" type argument

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: N.T. Wright, *The New Testament In its World*, Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary*, *Archaeological Study Bible*