

Galatians Unearthed Part 3: First Epistle to Galatians; Textual Criticism; Did Paul Void the Law? (Presented 12/23/2017)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZozVjXRTCc&index=3&list=PLml6y1h4ekf5GFjt-L8rqlrRihY0b12f>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a written document. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in the red text. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Well, the good news is we're already in part three of our series Galatians Unearthed. We ended part two by looking at the Jerusalem Council. The court had been seated; everyone who needed to be at this hearing was there including the apostles, the elders, and the assembly, (*ἐκκλησία, ekklēsia*). The court was seated, and Peter gave a testimony. He was brought forth as a witness, and the court heard him. Peter raised his voice and told them all the things the LORD was doing with the Gentiles in that the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) was falling down upon them. Peter talks about how the Jewish men, who were with Peter, marveled because they couldn't believe what was happening to the Gentiles. This was not the expectation because the Jews thought the gift of the Holy Spirit was for Israel. No Jew in their right mind even thought for a second this gift of the Holy Spirit was going to be extended to the Gentiles.

After Peter gets done giving his testimony, Paul and Barnabas rise and give their testimony. They basically tell the same thing Peter did about all these amazing signs and wonders they saw the LORD doing amongst the Gentiles. Then James rises to render judgment or to actually propose a resolution as to what should be done about this circumstance. He stated—**Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning [ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν] to God (Acts 15:19)**. In other words, these Gentiles are not required to become circumcised as they're turning to the faith. James goes on and gives basically two specific commandments which are food laws and sexual immorality laws. Interestingly enough, the only way to define this is through the Torah itself. This brings us up to where we are starting with part three.

We are going to continue in Acts 15:22—**Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch.** That would be quite apropos because where did the controversy begin? It began in Antioch. Now they're selecting chosen men to go back to Antioch—**with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren (Acts 15:22).**

I want you to appreciate exactly what the apostles are doing here. They know how delicate this situation really is. They know how strongly they're Jewish brethren feel about this. They know what the Torah says in Genesis seventeen. They know all these factors, and they're not taking any chances. What has been ruled in Jerusalem is going to be imposed upon the rest of the world beginning at Antioch.

They sent Judas and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas. Why is that a big deal? Because if you read the book of Acts, you discover Judas and Silas are prophets of God. These are men of renown, who have great respect amongst their Jewish brethren. They are revered, and there are no two better guys you could possibly send with Paul and Barnabas than Judas and Silas. The apostles know this is a very strategic move on their part.

As we continue, we are going to see the council put James's verdict in writing. Why would they put it in writing? Because it's a legal document. When a judge or jury decides in any particular case, it's going to be documented in written form.

So we now have this judgment found in Acts fifteen legalized and put down on paper. Here is what's fascinating. What we are about to read is the first epistle to the Galatians. This is the first known epistle to the Galatians—²³ **They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.** ²⁴ **Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" --to whom we gave no such commandment (emphasis added, Acts 15:23-24).**

I want to draw your attention to the highlighted part. I debated about whether or not to get into this statement. The last time I did the study, I didn't touch on this matter because I simply didn't want to. But this time we are going to go through this a little bit.

There is a debate that exists, and I want you to be equipped on multiple levels to respond to this debate. Here is the situation. The piece that I highlighted, **saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law,"** may not have been in the original text. It may have been added to the text and didn't exist in the earlier manuscripts. In fact, I pulled up twenty-five different translations of the Bible including the ISV, ESV, Homen Christian Bible, New English translation, King James, and the New King James being just a few of them. Only nine of them carry this actual statement within the text—**saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law."**

Now here's the interesting thing. Of those nine, that have this statement, three are all King James affiliated. So in reality, out of the twenty-five versions I looked at, only six others actually carry this text. Most of the translations I looked at, such as the New American Standard, read this way—**Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls (Acts 15:24, NASB).** So you can see that statement is not there in the NASB.

You need to understand, there is a war happening right now in textual criticism. That war is how we should be analyzing the manuscripts, how we should translate, and what manuscripts should we be utilizing for translation. It is not a war that had ever ceased, but it's exploding more now than ever before. I'm not going to go too deep into this; I'm just going to give you enough, so you understand the war.

Basically, there are the Byzantine text type otherwise known as majority text people on this side. Then on the other side, there are the critical text people. Many modern-day scholars are falling on the side of the critical text. There are many modern-day scholars who believe we should be looking at all the manuscripts that are available to us including the oldest manuscripts which are actually found in Alexandria.

So we have the majority text people (Byzantine) saying they are not going to include the Alexandrian Text because they believe it's inferior. They believe there are omissions and perhaps some foul play. They believe maybe Gnosticism has influenced the Alexandrian text. Then there are many modern-day scholars today who are of the critical text mindset that say that concept is ridiculous. They insist the Alexandrian text documents are closer to the autographs than anything else. So their mentality is the closer back we can get to the original document, the purer the translation. As a result, there are debates that repetitively go back and forth.

The New American Standard Bible would be part of the critical Text. The New King James, which I always teach out of, would fall in the Textus Receptus or Byzantine (majority) side by liberal extension. Now you can understand how some of your translations read differently. This is because of this war that is going on behind the scenes.

Having said that, with all the different translations, such as the New American Standard and the New King James, which are on the polar opposite of this war, which ones are going to affect doctrine? None of them. We have some people getting so caught up in this and saying things such as, "I take into consideration the Alexandrian manuscripts, and you're an idiot. You're not acknowledging the full reality of what we have found." Then the other side is saying—"Well, the Alexandrian manuscripts are totally corrupt text, and they don't make up hardly any percentage of all the five thousand manuscripts we have. They are just a minute part. Not just that, but geographically speaking our textual tradition is everywhere, whereas yours is isolated to Egypt alone."

So we could go back and forth and play this game. But at the end of the day, nothing affects the theology; nothing is affecting doctrine. You may be saying, "This certainly looks like it does." Well, let's look at this for a second. I'm just going to show you some commentary pertaining to the verse in question—*Saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law. The oldest authorities [manuscripts, not people] omit the Greek of these words, which look somewhat like a marginal explanation that has crept into the text, especially as "to keep the law" is an expansion.* Did you hear what they said? The commentary is isolating this last part—to keep the law—not the—Ye must be circumcised.

The commentary goes on to say—*though of course a correct one, of the statement made in Acts 15:1, about the teaching that was given.* Now listen carefully—*There circumcision alone is mentioned as the point on which disturbance was created.* I'm going to read it again—*There circumcision alone is mentioned as the point on which disturbance was created (emphasis added, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges).*

If you understand anything about what we are covering in this series and about what is being rendered here in this verdict, understand that statement because the person who wrote that commentary has correctly identified the problem. And I'm going to tell you, and this is going back to lesson two of the series, if you do not accurately identify the problem that existed, you will never correctly assess the conclusion that is given.

A perfect example of this is Mark 7 and Matthew 15. Many Christians believe when Yeshua declared all foods clean, pork now magically becomes clean and can be eaten as food. They believe that is what was being debated in these verses. However, you need to go back to the problem. What was the problem? The charge wasn't that the Pharisees came and said to Jesus, "Your apostles are eating pig." What the Pharisees said was the apostles were eating bread with unwashed hands. That was the charge. Do you

see how important it is to go back to the problem, to the charge, and to what is being alleged? That is the way I can get a conclusion that is the correct assessment.

Such is the problem with the Jerusalem Council. Some people look at this council and say, "It was declared the Gentiles don't need to do anything other than keeping the four things in Acts 15:20." This is how they look at it because they do not understand the charge. This commentary from Cambridge Bible nailed it. Go back to Acts 15:1, and this is what we read—**And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (emphasis added).** That's the charge. We're not unclear on that. This is isolating one specific commandment within the Torah, and that commandment pertains to circumcision.

Let me show you another commentary. *"Saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law;" the ceremonial law; the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause (Gills Exposition of the Entire Bible).* So when you look at this clause—*Saying, "you must be circumcised and keep the law" (Acts 15:24),* the commentator is saying the Latin Vulgate leaves that out. That is something you need to step back and think about. If you don't know what the Latin Vulgate is, it was the reigning Bible for over a thousand years. There was no King James Bible. For all those years, for over a thousand years, the Latin Vulgate was the Bible. According to this commentary, this statement is omitted. It's not found there. It is not found in the Ethiopic versions either. And of course, the Alexandrian text, which we know is the earliest manuscripts, doesn't possess that statement either. Isn't that interesting?

Now you might be thinking, "Daniel. Where do you stand on this?" I have to be honest. Whether it is included or not is irrelevant. And if you take anything away from this, this is what you need to understand. If you're going to get in a conversation about the Galatians and whether or not the Gentiles, who are Christians, should keep the Torah, you're going to be coming to the Jerusalem Council, and you need to have your arms wrapped around it in every angle. You need to be prepared and equipped. It doesn't really matter if it's there or not. Why do I say that? Because here's what I don't do. I don't take one little passage of Scripture, isolate it, and refuse to allow the other text of Scripture to speak. The only way you're going to have a problem with this is if you're an isolationist. The problem I have when I get into conversations with people who are doctrinally confused is I find they have become isolationist. They have isolated parts of Scripture and refuse to listen to the totality of the testimony.

Go back to Acts 15:1. We know the charge being made. I can't possibly understand this verse without the charge. The charge is specific—**Unless you are circumcised [Now catch this part] according to the custom of Moses.** In other words, these men who are going out and telling people this, they are not going out expressing their own opinion. They are not saying, "I really think you should all mutilate yourselves. You should cut yourselves. I think this would be a great idea." That is not what they are doing. They are coming with the precedent that is set in the Torah. The power is coming from the Torah. Therefore, they are saying, "The Torah says it; therefore, you must do it."

That makes a lot of sense if you're not listening to the rest of the Word of God and the fact it says in Isaiah 43:18-21 the LORD is going to do a new thing with the Gentiles. If I'm refusing the prophets, refusing what the Holy Spirit is doing, and refusing what I am witnessing with my own eyes, in that the LORD is circumcising the Gentiles with the circumcision made without hands, yeah, then that makes perfect sense.

So I would not understand this in Acts 15:24—**Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"—to whom we gave no such commandment**—without the charge in Acts 15:1—**And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."**

So when you read it in this context—**Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"—to whom we gave no such commandment (Acts 15:24)**, you can leave the stricken out portion in the text because that is what they were saying. And regarding the—**keep the law**. I would only understand—**keep the law**—within the context of circumcision itself. In fact, what you will find is Paul uses the terms circumcision and law transposable at times. Read the book of Romans; you will find him doing this. So if I understand it in the context of what they're doing, the premise of why they're telling the Gentiles you have to be circumcised, it is because the Law, Torah, says so. Does that make sense to you?

Let's take it a step further in understanding by getting the broader context of the word "speak" so that we understand what is being communicated. Last week I quoted this verse from Romans 2:13—**for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified**. This epistle to the Romans is written to Gentiles. What is Paul stating? He is stating only the doers of the Torah will be justified. Does it sound like he threw away the Law of Moses? Does that sound like what was rendered in Acts 15? Absolutely not! What was dealt with in Acts 15 is circumcision.

Look at what Paul says in Romans 3:31—**Do we then make void the law through faith?** I always say this is the million dollar question. Every one of you should have this verse committed to memory. If you call yourself a Torah observant believer in Yeshua, this must be committed to memory because when you go to talk with your Christian friends and family, this is the question, what are Christians supposed to do with the Torah after they come into faith with Yeshua. Do we make the Torah void? That is what's being taught today, but what does Paul say? **Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law (Romans 3:31)**. In the Greek, the word establish is ἵστημι, *histēmi*. It means to stand on the Torah because it's foundational. It is the rock. It is the firm foundation which you will be built upon through faith in Christ. Paul is actually drawing directly from the Torah itself. In Deuteronomy 27:26 it says—**Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them**.

So does it sound like the Torah has been done away with? Again, this is an epistle to the Gentiles. No, it has not been done away with.

So when it comes to the verdict, depending on whatever translation you're siding with, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. If you're reading the King James, you have to understand that passage from the totality of the Word of God.

Moving on Act 15:25—**it seemed good to us, having become of one mind**. This is critical because he's saying the council was not divided on this matter. If you have leadership that is divided in any community you go to, and you're seeing that pattern, that's a scary thing. That's not the pattern we find in Scripture. The leadership should be echad, one. James mentions the council is of one mind.

Continuing in Act 15:25—**to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul**. I love the fact he takes the time to say—**our beloved Barnabas and Paul**. In other words, this new Sanhedrin adores Barnabas and Paul. As we're going to see later in this article, they are giving them the right hand of fellowship.

Continuing in Acts 15:26-28—²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our LORD Jesus Christ. ²⁷ "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials. How brilliant is it to lay this out in this epistle, this written legal document, that the glory and the understanding of this first go to the Ruach HaKodesh? It goes to the Holy Spirit, who is the ultimate authority. In this matter, they don't put themselves first. They said it was first of the Holy Spirit and then to us. What does this tell you about this verdict? In the last couple of weeks, I keep building on this because you need to understand the power and the authority of what was done in Jerusalem.

Continuing from the start of Acts 15:28—²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials. Now he gets into the essentials in Acts 15:29—that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Remember what we communicated in part two? First, we need to purify the temple. If you first purify the temple, you will do well; the Holy Spirit will be with you. The Holy Spirit is the guide, witness, teacher, and a helper. He will tell you of things to come. This is very important to remember.

So what we have here is the first epistle to Galatians. It is very short and to the point. There is one more thing I have before we break into Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. For those of you who were really paying attention, you might be scratching your head regarding this epistle being given to the Galatians as in it being addressed to go to the Galatians. If you go back to Acts 15:23, it says to the—Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. So how do you determine this is for the Galatians? They weren't even mentioned. Hold on as we continue in Acts. I'm going to show this from Acts 15:36—Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the LORD, and see how they are doing." Jumping ahead Acts 16:1—Then he came to Derby and Lystra.

So this is what they did. They went back to Derby and Lystra. Where are these towns? They are in the province of Galatia. Acts 16:4—And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. This was all done by the hand of Paul to let the Gentiles know they didn't need to be circumcised to be saved, but they must do these essential things by implementing them immediately.

So here's the thing we know with absolute certainty; the Galatians possessed the truth in the verdict that was rendered in Jerusalem.

This information is something you need to have in order to really appreciate Paul's frustration. You're going to see much frustration from Paul. You can read 1 Corinthians, and you see some serious frustration from the Apostle Paul, but not like this. This is on a completely different level of what we're going to see with the Galatians.



Having said all of that, let's enter into this epistle to the Galatians. Galatians 1:1—**Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)**. You will notice Paul says something that he doesn't include in any other epistle. That is the statement—**not from men nor through man**. In other words, the first thing Paul is establishing is the credibility of his testimony. He is saying all of that telling the Galatians they had better take notice of him, who he is, and how he came to faith. This is critical to note. He goes on to verse 2-3—**and all the brethren who are with me, to the Churches of Galatia: ³ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our LORD Jesus Christ.**

This is very traditional for the Apostle Paul in his introductions. When he does this, he is showing the unity or the oneness of the Father and the Son. He never misses this opportunity. Think about that. Paul, who is a Jew, grew up singing the Shama—**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)**. He is declaring the Shama right in his introduction. This is so powerful!

Not just that, but go to Zachariah 14:9— **And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD is one,” And His name one.** This is the declaration. Read John 10:30—**I and My Father are one.** After Yeshua said this, what do the Jews do? They picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy—**because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.** So this introduction is powerful. Go through all of Paul's Epistles; he never wastes an opportunity to declare the Shama.

What is the oneness? What is this one? It is a passage of clarification, and this is a cry. The Shama is a cry out to the Jewish people to acknowledge the Son. And not just acknowledge that He is one, but that He is one with the Father.

Galatians 1:4-5—**⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.** They're working in perfect unity. Yeshua came to redeem us. He is the salvation of the world, but it's according to His Father's will. It is this perfect unity.

Now as we continue, we are going to see Paul doesn't waste any time. He gives these greetings and now he's going to get down to business, and he's going to inflict some of the most serious rebuke you've ever seen. This is very harsh. Galatians 1:6—**I marvel.** I marvel is the first thing he says. I have to tell you something. That statement makes me marvel. Think about the things the Apostle Paul has seen. Think about the things the Apostle Paul has experienced. Think about who he has literally talked to. Remember in Acts 9 when Yeshua himself, the resurrected LORD, showed Himself in His glory and knocked Paul off his animal? Paul went temporarily blind after that. Think about all these things, and now Paul is telling the Galatians that he marvels. To get this man to marvel is an awesome thing. Unfortunately, it's not a good awesome in this situation.

Starting again in Galatians 1:6—**I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel (emphasis added).** This is the harshest rebuke you could give anyone. What did Paul just say? He just called their salvation into question. Who does Paul think he is?

Can you imagine being the Galatians? They received a letter from the Apostle Paul, and everybody gathers around. They start to read the introduction which is wonderful. Then they get to verse six, and he says, “You guys have walked out of salvation. You guys are walking away from the LORD. You're walking into death.” He just called their salvation into question. There's nothing worse he could say. That's where you put the epistle down and freak out. Right?

The Galatians are probably thinking, “What do you mean we're not saved? What are you talking about? What's going on here?” Paul says they're turning away. What are they turning away to? A different gospel.

Let me ask you a question. What does that mean? Does that mean they turned back to pagan idols? Does that mean they are following false gods? Are they taking the Oprah Winfrey way, “There are many ways to God”? Unfortunately, no. That's not what they're doing.

Look at what Paul says in the very next statement—**which is not another (Galatians 1:7)**. In other words, Christ is still the center. He is still being deemed the Messiah. The Galatians were still out to follow Him; He is the savior of the world. It is not another gospel. How frightening is this to show this level of deception, and salvation is on the line, yet they're still confessing Yeshua as LORD?

Think about the implications of this statement. This is terrifying! So Paul says—**which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ (emphasis added, Galatians 1:7)**. So this is the issue. The gospel is getting perverted it's being transformed into something it's not. There are false heresies or doctrine coming in. But what is that perversion? What's this perversion Paul is talking about? Interesting enough, we're actually given the answer right here in the verse. What does this say? It is highlighted—**there are some who trouble you**.

It's important to point out here these words Paul was speaking. In this context, these words would have resonated with the Galatians. Why do I say that? I say that because they've heard this language before. Where have they heard this language before? In Acts 15:24, which was the head of the document, the first epistle, that went out to the Galatians—**Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words**.

Does this sound familiar? Paul is saying the exact same thing. These men who are perverting the gospel of Mashiach and troubling the Galatians are the very same men who were dealt with in Jerusalem. They are the very same men Paul and Barnabas had to go up against in Antioch. Let me ask you the question. What was the problem then? Circumcision.

What does that tell you about what Paul is saying to the Galatians? It tells you the Galatians are giving into these men. They are giving into a corrupt teaching, and they are now becoming circumcised for salvation. That is what was happening. You want to know what this epistle is all about? It is all about circumcision and the fact they're doing this.

I want to throw something at you, and you need to listen to me very carefully, because this is something so many people don't acknowledge. It goes right over their head. This is important because it has to do with how the Gentiles viewed the Torah in the first century.

Let me ask you a question. Why were the Galatians so inclined to get circumcised? Let's be honest men. If you existed in the first century, and there are Jews running around telling you that you need to get circumcised as a grown adult, you're not going to be running to do that. You're not looking to do that. That's not fun. You don't have circumcision parties. They don't exist in the first century; you won't find them. In other words, what I'm saying is there's absolutely no motivation for any man, who is in his right mind, to want to cut himself like that. None. Zero. Unless what? Unless the Torah says so.

Do you understand where I'm going with this because it is critical? These men who were coming to the Galatians were leveraging the love, the reverence, the fear, and the care these Galatians had for the Torah. That was the only way they could get the Galatians to do this. So this whole concept that the first century Gentiles believed the Torah was totally done away with, that they had no affinity for that, is

blown out of the water just by what's happening. That idea doesn't work because the only way they would actually fall into this idea of circumcising themselves was if they loved the Torah.

These men were very clever. The enemy is very clever. Have we ever heard of the enemy taking the Torah and manipulating it? Yes, we have. Do you remember the wilderness experience with Yeshua and HaSatan? HaSatan went to war against Yeshua with the Torah. He used Scripture against Yeshua. He used the prophets against Yeshua. And Yeshua responded with the Torah and the prophets.

Isn't that an interesting scenario because that's exactly what happened at the Jerusalem Council? There were perverted men misunderstanding what is going on and misunderstanding the Torah and the prophets. James responds with the Torah and the prophets. He responds with Scripture to support his verdict. It was absolutely amazing!

I want to be clear on something. The reverence the Galatians have for the Torah is not the problem. It is the interpretation of the Torah that is the problem.

Moving on to Galatians 1:8—**But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed (emphasis added).** Again, the language Paul used is amazing. By the time you get to verse eight, if you're a Galatian, you have fallen off your seat. Paul is coming out so strong and saying he and the others preached the truth to the Galatians, but if he and the others come back and preach something else, they were to be cut off. Cut off in the Greek is *ἀνάθεμα*, *anathema*. It means accursed.

Paul doesn't stop there. He says if an angel of God comes down from heaven and preaches to you something other than what you have received, they are to be accursed.

Those of you who know the Torah know how egregious this really is, and you understand exactly where Paul is coming from. What do I mean by that? Let me take you back to Deuteronomy 17:7-8 where we are instructed to take any matter of controversy and go up to Jerusalem to the Sanhedrin who will declare to you a verdict.

I want to take you back there and show you something so you can appreciate exactly what Paul is talking about here. In Deuteronomy 17:11—¹¹ **According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do.** Whatever verdict is decided, you were to do it. Period. Continuing—**You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you.** ¹² **Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge.** Stop here and think about something. The apostles and elders were the priests and judges. They were the Sanhedrin. You can read in Exodus where it tells us Israel would be a nation of priest. Peter himself quotes this to his own brethren in his first epistle. He tells the people they are priests and judges. Continuing—**that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel.**

Do you understand where Paul's coming from? It is interesting the premise of Paul's words in Galatians 1:8 come directly from the Torah. He is telling the Galatians, "We gave you the verdict in Jerusalem. It has been rendered unto you, but you're not listening to it. Therefore, anyone who comes and preaches something else other than what we have rendered, let him be cut off, totally accursed."

Continuing in Galatians 1:9—**As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.** Paul has stated this twice now. That is the same thing you will find Yeshua doing in His teachings, and Paul does this same thing. Why do they

do this? To add emphasis. Emphasis establishes a statement. When you hear them repeating things twice, you need to step back and let it soak in. Meditate on it.

Galatians 1:11—**But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.** Paul's drawing right back to where he started in this epistle. Verse 12—**For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.** You can read about this event in Paul's life in Acts 9.

Moving on to Galatians 1:13-14—**For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.** ¹⁴ **And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.** This goes back to what we covered last week. Paul was the Pharisee of all Pharisees. Here he brings out the fact he went beyond his contemporaries. He was the elite among his brethren.

Galatians 1:15-16—¹⁵ **But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,** ¹⁶ **to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.** So Paul was knocked off his animal, went blind, had a conversation with the risen LORD Jesus, and saw His glory. Notice Paul didn't walk around saying, "Could you guys come over here; I have to tell you about my experience. It was pretty wonderful. The LORD is calling me to the ministry. What do you think about that? Do you think I should go? Do you think I should actually do this? Do you think this experience was authentic?" There was no question about it in Paul's mind. He wasn't asking men what they thought; he didn't care what any man thought. He knew he had experienced the LORD. For Paul, the matter was resolved. He didn't need anyone to come and tell him, "Yes, I think it is a good idea." He didn't need anyone telling him it was not a good idea.

This was so much a fact that we can see this in his very next statement in Galatians 1:17—**nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me.** Think about that statement. I mean the greatest of the great were in Jerusalem, Peter, James, and John. These were the pillars of the Church, and Paul didn't even feel compelled to go up there because how could they establish something Yeshua had already established himself.

Galatians 1:18—**Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.** Now was the time to talk to other men. I do like how Paul's ascent to Jerusalem after he comes into the faith is explicitly to see Peter. I think that's valuable information because there is a special unity or brotherhood that exists between Paul and Peter. We will see that later on in this epistle.

Continuing in Galatians 1:18-24—**and remained with him fifteen days.** ¹⁹ **But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the LORD's brother.** ²⁰ **(Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)** ²¹ **Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.** ²² **And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.** ²³ **But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."** ²⁴ **And they glorified God in me.**

I want to go back to the words— **hearing only.** I like some of the other translations because they flip-flop those words around. They say, only hearing. I like that better because it is saying all they were talking about, all that was being said, was—**He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.**" They couldn't believe it. This was all they could talk about. The one who was destroying the faith has now come into it! It was an unbelievable testimony.

Moving on to Galatians 2:1-2—¹ Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. ² And I went up by revelation. Or because of revelation. What was that revelation? It was what God was doing with the Gentiles, how they were receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and how they were being circumcised with a circumcision made without hands.

Paul goes on and says this in Galatians 2:2—and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. What Paul is describing here in Galatians 2:2 is the whole discourse found in Acts 15. He's literally telling you what happened in Acts 15, from his account not Luke's account.

Let me take you back to Acts 15:2—Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

When we first read this without having what we are going to have in a second, we just blow by that information. It doesn't even stick out. But it sticks out now. Luke records there were other people who went up with Paul and Barnabas. Now the Apostle Paul actually names one of these “certain others” by name. What does he call him? Go back to Galatians 2:1—Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. Titus is one of these “certain others.” Paul is bringing Titus into the mix. As we continue, we are going to understand why.

Galatians 2:3—Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised (emphasis added). Think about this. What is this epistle all about? It is all about circumcision. When you read this epistle and you didn't know it was all about circumcision, you have to wonder why Paul would bring this up. Why would he talk about Titus? Because Titus wasn't compelled to be circumcised.

What a brilliant thing to do because this letter is all about circumcision. Paul is talking to Gentiles who are falling into a falsehood, so he brings a Gentile to the table; and not just any Gentile. If you went through the Titus series, you know he's a Titan; a powerhouse of the faith. The fascinating thing about it all was that Titus was in the midst of that war. I want you to think about that. This war that was erupting in Antioch, as we read in Acts 15, Titus was there. Paul's making the point that not even Titus who was in the midst of this battle, who saw us going toe to toe with the circumcision party, not even he was compelled to be circumcised. This was the problem in Galatia. Make sure you identify the problem.

Now Paul is going to go on to describe these men who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. Listen to how he describes them because this is the Acts 15 account that is found in Paul's words in Galatians 2:4—And this occurred because of false brethren. Do you want to know what Paul thought of these men who came down and were going toe to toe with him and Barnabas? He calls them false brethren.

Continuing in Galatians 2:4-5—secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), ⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Not for a moment did they back down. Titus is in their midst, and not for a moment was he compelled to be circumcised. Paul is pulling out every possible stop he could to bring the Galatians to a right set of mind. He is doing everything in his power to do this.

Continuing in Galatians 2:6-8—⁶ But from those who seemed to be something-whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man--for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. ⁷ But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward

the Gentiles). In other words, Paul is saying Peter was set out for a particular ministry to the Jewish people. Paul was set out for a particular purpose to the Gentiles.

I want to be clear on something because scripturally we can support both of those statements. It doesn't mean Peter didn't preach to the Gentiles because he did. He was the first apostle to the Gentiles. It also does not mean Paul did not bring the Gospel to the Jew first because he did. Over and over again we see this testimony in Scripture, but the primary focus of the ministry, their fruit they would inherit, would be that Paul was primarily to the Gentile; Peter's would be primarily to the Jewish.

Galatians 2:9—**and when James, Cephas, and John**. I don't see this order as coincidental but rather intentional. Notice how Paul names James first. That makes sense because James is the Nazi. He is the prince of the court, and Paul names James first.

Continuing in Galatians 2:9—**James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars**. If you look at this word seemed in the Greek, the sticks out. Who seemed? It's a personal reflection. This is personally what Paul thought not just what others thought. This is personally, internally, who Paul thought seemed to be pillars. Paul acknowledged James, Peter, and John as pillars of the Church.

Continuing in verse 9—**who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised**. I want you to understand something. This concept of the right hand of fellowship is not simply Peter, James, and John saying to Paul, "Bless you. Bless you. Go in the name of the LORD. Go preach to the Gentiles." That's not what the right hand of the fellowship is. The right hand of fellowship is, "We stand with you. We interlock our shields with you. We are your brothers in war, and we are completely unified in the work the LORD is sending you out to do. We support you in the things you are preaching."

It is critical to understand Paul has the right hand of fellowship, and it's not just Paul's testimony that is doing this. Go read Luke's testimony in the book of Acts. It is an external source showing exactly what Paul was saying is true. They have the right hand of fellowship.

We're going to go to one more verse—**They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do (Galatians 2:10)**. This was already in Paul's heart. In fact, I'll take it a step further. It wasn't just in Paul's heart, but it was all the Gentiles who were coming into the faith. Read in Romans 15:26 how the people of Macedonia and Achaia took up a contribution for the poor that were in Jerusalem. Paul commends them and tells them this is a good thing because if the people of Macedonia and Achaia have reaped the spiritual gifts of those in Jerusalem, they were now to minister to them in physical gifts. These were the poor in Jerusalem.

Nothing has changed. These are all legitimate things. Everything we're talking about is concrete to the faith even to this day.

Amen.