

“Justification’s Challenge to the *Early Church*”

Christian Liberty

Galatians 2:15-21

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Background:

- The NT letters as “occasional documents”: for specific times, people and needs (to *them*, though indirectly for us all)
- The timing of Galatians (whether northern or southern theory): near the occasion of the Jerusalem Council (Ac.15) – i.e. mid-first century
- Pressure of that time: Mosaic & monarchial eras (c.1400-586BC), post-exilic and Inter-testamental had seen much change in the “Jewish” experience
- Specific challenge of “Judaizers” (e.g. Ebionites) to nascent church: why so appealing? (and were there doctrinal differences between Jews of that time?)
- An ‘ancient’ issue: perhaps a common and essentially *human* issue

Text:

- “We are Jews by birth...yet we know....” (vv.15-16)
- “Yet if we also are found to be sinners...what then is Christ? (vv.17-18)
- “Through Law I died to L/law” (v.19)
- Once one is “crucified with Christ....” (v.20)
- Grace upheld (not nullified) b/c righteousness not obtained via L/law (v.21)

For Us Today:

- Law as the character of God translated into daily life(style)
- Deadly obsession: we *need* L/law, but cannot live by it
In what ways do we always need law?
- Law can give people a (misleading) sense of self-oriented control
- What is grace? Is there any grace in law, or any law in grace?
And what does grace do that law cannot?
- What grace-filled people look like....