

## Galatians Chapter 2

### Verses 17-18

1. The "we" is referring to the Jews. If the law cannot save anyone (including Jews), and Jews must also come to Christ as sinners for justification, is it Christ that made them sinners? Paul declares, "God forbid."
2. It is the law that reveals sin and finds us all to be sinners. The law brings the "...ministration of death." The law condemns all of us as guilty sinners.  
**2 Corinthians 3:7-9**
3. The law built a wall between Jews and Gentiles. God had torn that wall down in Christ. Peter was building again something that he had helped to destroy (see **Acts 10-11**).
4. To build again that law system was simply to make themselves transgressors because nobody can keep the law.

### Verse 19

1. Praise God for this verse! Paul firmly establishes the believer's relationship to the law. We are dead to the law that we might live unto God.
2. As mentioned previously, the law brings death. It is the law that reveals our spiritually dead condition. **Romans 7:7**
3. Here in verse 19 Paul declares that "I **through the law** am dead." How did the law execute us and put us to death?
4. **Romans 7:9-11** explains it perfectly:
  - **"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."**
5. The law has no jurisdiction over a dead man. It is irrelevant.
6. But, wait a minute - this verse goes on to say, "That I might **live** unto God." If the law has slain us and killed us, how can we be living?
7. The next verse will explain this wonderful truth.

### Verse 20

1. This is one of the richest verses in the New Testament. It explains how we could die and yet live.
2. Paul declares, "For I am crucified with Christ...." What does he mean?
3. When a person by faith accepts Christ as his/her Savior, the Bible teaches that the believer actually becomes one with Christ. **Ephesians 5:30** states, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The believer is now said to be "**in Christ**."
4. This means that our history and experience is now wrapped up in His. My identification is now solely found in the person and experience of Christ.

5. Christ met all the demands of the law, but chose to pay the law's penalty and die under its curse. Because I am in Christ, God sees me dying with Him on the cross. I also died **in Him**.
  - Illustration: if I had died as a teen-ager, my three boys would have died in me.
6. But it doesn't stop there. Because Christ was buried, I was buried in Him. Here's the good part - because Christ rose from the dead and is now alive, I am alive in Him! I pulsate with the life of Christ.
  - This is why Paul said, "**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me....**"
7. It even goes further - because Christ was exalted in the heavenlies, I have been given an exalted position in the heavenlies. **Ephesians 2:6** (Notice that it's already been done because I am **in Him**.)
  - No wonder the Bible says "If any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." **2 Corinthians 5:17**
8. Galatians 2:20 should be read in conjunction with Romans 6. This passage explains that:
  - When a person is saved by faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit (cf. **1 Corinthians 12:13**) baptizes him/her into Christ - into His death (vs.3), burial (vs.4), and resurrection (vs.4-5).
  - Because our old man died in Christ (vs.6-10), the things of our old life no longer hold any authority over us, namely sin (vs.11-13, 17-18, 22) and the law (vs.14, cf. 7:4, 6).
9. Back in Galatians 2:20, Paul concludes this verse by stating, "...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
  - What this means is that the new resurrection life that we live and enjoy is all because of Jesus.
  - He lived a perfect and sinless life, keeping the law in all points. This is what the phrase "the faith of the Son of God" refers to.
  - Christ is the only One who did not deserve to die under the law's demands, yet He chose to give His life for us. Why would He do this? Paul simply says, "He loved me."

## Verse 21

1. Paul has explained how the law cannot justify a person. The believer has no relationship to the law after salvation. We are dead to the law, having died and risen in Christ. As Warren Wiersbe writes, "To go back to the law is to return to the graveyard."
2. This verse is a marvelous conclusion to this chapter. If the law can impart life and righteousness to a person, then Christ's death was in vain. It was meaningless.
3. We are left with only two choices:
  - Either we are placed in Christ by God's grace through faith in Him, thereby having the righteousness of Christ imparted to us.
  - Or we are left to try to keep a system of rules and laws that nobody has ever been able to keep, and therefore stand condemned, guilty, and worthy of death.

4. There cannot be a mixture of these two - to do so is to "frustrate (neutralize or violate) the grace of God." This is what Peter was doing in verse 12. Through his actions he was proclaiming that the grace of God was not enough and that the law was also needed.
5. Warren Wiersbe encourages believers to ask themselves six key questions in reflecting on the truth of this chapter:
  - a. Have I been saved by the grace of God?
  - b. Am I trying to mix law and grace?
  - c. Am I rejoicing in the fact that I am justified by faith in Christ?
  - d. Am I walking in the liberty of grace?
    - We now obey God because of love, not because of law.
  - e. Am I willing to defend the truth of the Gospel?
  - f. Am I living the truth of the Gospel?
    - My verbal defense will mean very little if my life contradicts what I say.