

**Some obvious questions**

Having made his basic statement <sup>1</sup> Paul now begins to expound it, defend it, work out all its implications and answer the many questions that might be asked. Galatians gets more complicated! We notice that Paul does not finish the story of what happened at Antioch! I suppose that Peter was not immediately convinced (or Paul would have told us!). But Peter's words in Acts 15, in 2 Peter 1:1 and 3:15 all suggest that he was eventually convinced that Paul was right. It was not the first time Peter had walked on the rough water, began to sink, but got lifted up quite soon! Paul must now answer some obvious questions.

<sup>1</sup> 2:15-16

**• Does the gospel lead to loose living and wickedness?**

Does the gospel lead to licentiousness? Does it lead to loose living? This is always the objection to any clear preaching of the gospel. People say: 'You are saying that sin does not matter!' Paul had to answer the question and so does anyone who truly preaches the gospel. If you don't have to answer the problem you are not preaching the gospel properly! Paul faces the same difficulty. *'But if while we are seeking to be justified in Christ we also are found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? No, certainly not!'* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2:17

**• Doesn't Justification by faith encourage sin?**

Jewish Christians abandon their desires to be justified by the Mosaic law. They put their trust in Jesus. They even start breaking parts of the Mosaic law. They eat with gentiles (which was illegal). They might eat pork or meat that is not 'kosher' (soaked, salted, and washed to remove any traces of blood). They might eat milk and meat at the same time, or do some cooking on a Saturday. All of this was illegal in the Mosaic law. So does justification only by faith in Jesus lead to wickedness? If it leads us to be found to be 'sinners' (living like gentiles in some ways), does it mean that justification by faith in Jesus encourages sin? The answer is: no, not at all. Perish the thought! The idea is altogether wrong. It has a wrong view of sin (as if food laws and such minor matters are important!). It has a wrong view of the law (as if law can change the heart). It has a wrong view of Christ (as if Christ is incapable of leading us into godliness). It has a wrong view of faith (as if we believe in Christ as justifier, but not Christ as sanctifier). The accusation is altogether false and reveals much ignorance! Paul goes on to deal with it in compressed detail.

**• Questions based on a wrong view of the law, Christ and faith**

**Answer 1: It would be sinful to return to the Mosaic law**

**1. It would be sinful for Paul to abandon faith in Christ-only and go back to Mosaic law.** *'Actually – to explain further – if I build up again the things that I once got rid of, then I really do make myself a law-breaker'* <sup>1</sup>. The very essence of salvation is to abandon justification by the Mosaic law! Actually abandoning the law is the only thing that leads to sanctification! Holding on to the law is the thing that makes me a sinner – for several reasons.

<sup>1</sup> 2:18

**• I have died to the Mosaic Law**

(i) It is not God's will for me. God tells me very plainly that I have died to the Mosaic law. I am rebellious, a transgressor, a law-breaker if I don't believe what God says!

• **The law holds me down to a low level of Godliness**

**Answer 2: Freedom from the Mosaic law brings more of God's life – not less!**

• **I have been legally released from the law**

• **I died to the law to come alive to God!**

breaker, if I don't believe what God says!

(ii) In any case if I hold on to a **Mosaic** way of living – worrying about 2,000 verses of Mosaic legislation which can be reduced to 613 commands, and thinking that meditating on the ten commandments will make me holy – then all of that will hold me down to a **low** level of godliness. I will then **really** be a law-breaker, a transgressor of what God really wants for me.

**2. Freedom from the Mosaic law leads me to experience the life of God more than ever!** *'Because through the law itself I died to the law, in order that I might really come alive for God!'* <sup>□1</sup>. Paul is now moving into profound and moving spiritual truth. The Christian has to 'die' to the law before he or she can really live the godly life! Mosaic law does not help godliness. It hinders godliness!

By my faith in Jesus Christ I die to the law. It is the law itself that makes me die to the law! It happens **objectively** (as a matter of sheer fact). It is a sheer fact that the punishment of the law fell upon Jesus and so I have been released from the law. I have been **legally** released from the law. The law itself pronounces my freedom. Christ redeemed me from the curse of the law by being made a curse in my place<sup>□1</sup>.

The purpose, says Paul, of this dying to the law through the body of Christ on the cross<sup>□1</sup> is that I then should come alive as never before. I 'died'; I then 'came alive'. When I trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ I was immediately released from the law. My 'dying to the law' upon the cross took effect in my life and became a spiritual reality. At the same time I was raised from the dead spiritually. It was like Lazarus walking out of the tomb with the graves clothes being immediately removed. I became a new person when I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. I no longer **needed** the Mosaic law. I was 'alive unto God'<sup>□2</sup>. By my faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ I could walk in newness of life. Is Christ the minister of sin? The thought is utter nonsense! I died to the law to come alive to God!

□1 2:19

□1 See 3:13 and 4:4

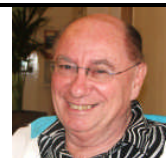
□1 See Romans 7:4

□2 See Romans 6:11



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