

Galatians #14

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we welcome you today to our June 18 class, and I just want to remind you that we are in a little bit of a different mode for these Thursday mornings for at least the month of June.

And we are inviting each one who has a question about whatever, doesn't have to do necessarily with the subject matter we're dealing with, but question regarding the Bible or the Christian life in any area that is of concern or of interest to you, feel free to write out the question, submit it, don't sign it.

We want to protect everybody's privacy, and it's anonymous, and we've been doing this for the last few weeks, and my intention is that this will conclude the last Thursday in June, unless the interest is obvious and you want to continue, and if that's the case, then there will be more questions, and we want to treat them, because this is the only way that we can be sure that we are addressing issues that are really of concern to each of you here, and that's why we provide this opportunity.

So if we run out of questions or we're able to cover them by the end of June, then we'll move on, and our first session in July will be returning to our exposition of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

And in it, a subject matter will be discussed that has to do with this particular question, a short, sweet question that someone of you submitted, and it is this.

[1 : 3 7] Why Paul? Why not one of the twelve? And that is a very good question. And the reason for Paul, rather than one of the twelve, is that God is using the Apostle Paul to institute, to engage an entirely new order, something that never before was revealed or even thought of.

And that's why the Bible calls it, in a number of places, a mystery. Mystery, in the New Testament, is something that was not revealed or predicted earlier.

So it's important to make a careful distinction between what the Bible calls mystery and what it calls prophecy. When you get into the Old Testament, you find a lot of prophecy.

It has to do with the prediction and the telling of things that are to come. For instance, in the Old Testament, there are all kinds of prophecies about the Messiah, who is to come.

And it's really spelled out. You'll find prophecies regarding Christ's first coming and prophecies regarding Christ's second coming. But what makes the Apostle Paul, and what he is brought on the scene to do, what makes it a mystery is that you don't find even a hint of it in the Old Testament, where it was ever prophesied.

[3 : 1 1] No prediction about this thing called the body of Christ. That's entirely new.

To the person of God through Christ, going to bring in people for whom allowance was never made before. Who are these people?

You. Me. The Bible calls them Gentiles. They are not Jews. As you go through the Old Testament, and as you go through the four Gospels, what you find is Jew, Jew, Jew, Jew.

The only time any Gentiles ever surface, they play a very minor, insignificant role, almost as if they didn't count at all. All of the focus is upon the Jew.

This is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants from Genesis to Malachi. All about the Jew. And the reason is because God singled out this one man by the name of Abraham and promised to bless him and his seed, that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him.

[4 : 52] And we see how that is all fulfilled, and it sums up in the person of Jesus Christ. But the Gentiles were really pretty much left out in the cold. And to give you an example of that, let's go, if you've got your Bible, let's go for just a moment to one of the most definitive passages that really spells this out in, I think, an indisputable way.

And that is in Ephesians chapter 2. Remarkable passage here. Ephesians chapter 2. And Paul spells out exactly what's going on.

Remember, Ephesians are the people who were in Ephesus. This is Asia Minor. Ephesus is modern day Turkey. And when Paul was there, he spent 18 months, I believe it was, in Ephesus, proclaiming the gospel and establishing a church.

And now, after having left Ephesus, he is writing back to these people to bring them up to date and to inform them about things they need to know and to update them regarding his ministry.

And when he addresses them in chapter 2, he says, And you, and the you, of course, refers back to verse 1.

[6 : 17] That's his audience. They are the saints at Ephesus, then the faithful in Christ Jesus. And Paul says, And you, you people there at Ephesus, hath he quickened.

Some translations use the old English, old King James is quickened. But it means he has made you alive. This is a spiritual alive. He made you alive on the inside.

He made you alive to God. Whereas before, you were dead to God. He has made you alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Wherein, in time past, you walked according to the course of this world. In other words, these people there at Ephesus were sold completely into the world.

They were part of the worldly mix. And they just marched to the drumbeat of this world like everybody else. You walked according to the course of this world.

[7 : 17] According to the prince of the power of the air. This, of course, is demonic, satanic power. The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

Among whom, also, we all had our lusts of our flesh, our conversation in time past, lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. And then, what I'm looking for is further on down in the chapter.

Let me just start reading with verse 11. Okay. Wherefore, remember. He's calling these people to mind. He's saying, remember that you, being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision.

That was just another name for Gentiles. They'd never been circumcised. And that was one of the chief characteristics that distinguished the Jew. Every Jew would have been circumcised.

[8 : 25] Called circumcision in the flesh made by hands. Now, listen to this. Listen to this, guys. That at that time, you were, without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

Now, what was a commonwealth of Israel? That was that special covenant that God established with Abraham and all his seed, wherein he would be a blessing to the nations of the world.

They are selected as the most favored nation, if you will, by God himself. They are the chosen people. And what Paul is saying here is that you Gentiles, you didn't have any part in that.

None. Zero. You were not involved in that at all. You were completely omitted from the commonwealth of Israel. Or the special covenant that God established with Israel and later through Moses.

He says you were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. Now, their plight was pretty bad off.

[9 : 36] Listen to this. Having no hope. No hope. And without God in the world. That was the status of everyone who was not a Jew.

And we're talking about 99% plus of the population. That was the fix that the Gentiles were in.

And they were, of course, given to paganism. The worship of many gods and many false deities. Idolatry and all the rest. Just pure heathenism. Without hope.

And without God in the world. Listen to this. But now. But now. He tells these people. In Christ Jesus.

You. Who sometimes. Were far off. Are made nigh. That's an old English word that means. You are brought near.

[10 : 42] You are made nigh. By the blood of Christ. Christ. And the word. The blood of Christ. Is simply. A term that actually means. The death of Christ.

That, of course, was realized through the shedding of our blood. For he is our peace. And his Christ is our peace. That's why he's called the Prince of Peace.

Who have made both. One. Now what's the both? Jew. And Gentile.

These were two separate entities. And now. Paul is saying. He has made both. One. And fellas.

That was absolutely. Totally. Inconceivable. To the Jew. That the Gentile.

[11 : 38] The uncircumcised. Could be brought in. On the same plane. As the chosen people. The Jews.

Unthinkable. Well, it was unthinkable. Hey. That's why it's called a mystery. This is the body of Christ.

It's a whole new thing. Where do you find this in the Old Testament? It isn't there. It just isn't there. And you do not find it in the Gospels either.

This is a whole new order. It is a blockbuster item. And listen. This is precisely why. The Apostle Paul. Received so much grief.

And flack. From his fellow Jews. Because he was preaching. That there is therefore now. No distinction between Jew and Gentile.

[12 : 35] We are all made to drink of one spirit. Whether we be Jew. Gentile. Bond or free. Male or female. Everybody is on the same level before God.

And the Jewish response was. That's crazy. That's blasphemy. Kill that SOB. And that's exactly what they tried to do.

And that's exactly why they tried to do it. They said that Paul was teaching against the law of Moses. He even told some of these non-Jews.

When they came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. He even told them they didn't even have to be circumcised. Can you believe that? That's crazy. And they held a big council in Acts chapter 15.

To decide that issue. That surely the Jews. The Gentiles would have to be circumcised like the Jews were. And what Paul is saying is. No, no, no, no. Listen. This is an entirely different thing.

[13 : 39] Now there is a spiritual circumcision. What in the world is that? How can somebody be spiritually circumcised? It's on the inside.

It's the circumcision of the heart that involves the volition. It involves the faith that one has in Christ. And when you put your faith in Jesus Christ.

Whether you were male or female. And by the way, this is a new thing. Circumcised females? Yeah. Spiritually circumcised. When a woman puts her faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

She is circumcised in the heart. That is a spiritual circumcision. And so are men. That's an entirely different thing. Well, who in the world ever heard of such a thing? Because in the New Testament.

Under the plan and program that God is committing to Paul. There is a movement away. From the purely physical to the spiritual. And this is what Paul meant when he said, We walk, we conduct our lives on the basis of faith.

[14 : 44] Not sight. When you are walking by sight. You have got something to look at. What were they looking at? Miracles.

Signs. Wonders. Where are our signs? Where are our wonders? How many people do you know who have been raised from the dead? How many people do you know who were born lame and now are able to walk?

How many people do you know? Well, we could go on and on and on. Because today the emphasis is on the spiritual, not on the physical. So, he continues by saying here in Galatians that...

I'm sorry. We're in Ephesians, aren't we? I lost my place. In Ephesians, he says, But now, in Christ Jesus, you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

[15 : 57] What in the world does that mean? It means just this. When you went to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, there was a place that was called the Court of the Gentiles.

If you were not a Jew, of course you were a Gentile, you were allowed there on the Temple Mount. You were allowed up to that particular barrier. There was a fence that went all around the temple area.

This is a huge area. There was a wooden fence, a rail fence that went all the way around the area. And on the outside of that fence was an area called the Court of the Gentiles.

And if you were a Gentile, you were allowed to go up there and be in that court. And by the way, it's interesting that they found, this was just in the 1990s, excavators found an ancient sign.

One of the signs that was posted all the way around the perimeter of that. A sign that was a warning to the Gentiles.

[17 : 09] If you were a son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you are not permitted beyond this point. And you could forfeit your life if you violate that.

That was specifically for Israel on the other side of that barrier. And Paul is here saying that God has broken down the middle wall of partition that separated Jew from Gentile and now doesn't exist anymore.

There is no barrier because we are all one in Christ. This was such a new thing. It just hit like a bombshell. And many of the Jews had great difficulty accepting it.

One that had great difficulty accepting it was the one who was called by God to proclaim it and explain it. And that was Paul. Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of the Jew.

Now he is called to proclaim this message that he once tried to destroy. So, in Acts chapter 9, I want to point out this to you. This is the conversion account.

[18 : 22] If you have got your Bible and you want to follow us on this. In Acts chapter 9, where Paul is confronted by the risen Christ on the road to Damascus.

And by the way, it was just shortly before this, chapter 9, just shortly before this, that Saul of Tarsus held the garments of his fellow Jews who were physically stoning Stephen to death.

That's how chapter 7 ends with the stoning of Stephen. And that didn't take place very long before we've got the conversion account here in chapter 9.

And I'm not going to read all of the account, but I just want to jump in with verse 8. After the encounter, Saul arose from the earth.

His eyes were open. He saw no man. They led him by the hand, brought him into Damascus. Here he's blind. And he was three days without sight. Neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple of Damascus named Ananias.

[19 : 33] And this is not to be confused with the Ananias of Sapphira. Back in chapter 5, this is a different Ananias. And he said to him in a vision, Ananias?

And he said, Behold, I am your Lord. And the Lord said unto Ananias, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight. By the way, fellows, I haven't been there, but I've talked to a number of people who have.

You can still go. Well, you probably couldn't do it today, maybe, with Syria being the hot box that it is. But there was a time not very long ago when, as a tourist, you could go to Damascus, which still is, of course, the oldest continuing populated city in the entire world, Damascus, Syria.

You could go there, and you can identify and walk on the street that is called Straight. Still there. Still clearly marked.

And tourists are attracted to it, of course. And you go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas. And again, there are several Judases in the Bible.

[20 : 45] This is not to be confused with Judas Iscariot. Different is Judas. For one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he prays, and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight.

And Ananias said, Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he has done to thy saints of Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priest to bind all that call on thy name.

And the Lord said to Ananias, listen to this, guys, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles.

Gentiles. And kings. And the children of Israel. In other words, everybody. Everybody. Paul's audience is not going to be confined.

He's going to preach this gospel of Christ, death, burial, and resurrection, to everybody. And he is not going to lose the special burden he has for his Jewish countrymen because he knows exactly where they're coming from.

[21 : 57] That's the same place he was coming from before he came to faith in Christ. So here is this individual who is raised up of God specifically for the purpose to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

They never had one. Israel had twelve apostles. And I suspect, we don't know this for sure, but I suspect that there were twelve apostles because there were twelve tribes of Israel and it's kind of like there was an apostle for each of the twelve tribes.

And Christ sent them out two by two. Teams of two. And what they were supposed to tell people, and by the way, these twelve apostles were all, without exception, Jews.

And to whom were they to go? Matthew 10 makes it very, very clear. Christ called these. He gave them authority. Gave them authority to work miracles like he was doing.

They didn't have the authority. He imparted his authority to them enabling them to do that. And he told them, go not in the way of the Gentiles.

[23 : 18] Think of this, guys. This is tremendous stuff. Don't go to the Gentiles. He specifically told them, don't go to the Gentiles. Don't go to the Samaritans.

Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Does that say anything to you? Does that particular audience give you any kind of a clue?

What is this? Confine your ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. You go only to the Jew. Well, didn't Jesus care about anybody else?

Was the Jew the only one he cared about? Of course not. Christ died for the sins of who? World. Does that include just Gentiles?

No, it includes everybody. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. Now, fellas, there's an important distinction. I want you to catch on to this because this is so important. Christ did not come to the world.

[24 : 28] He came to Israel for the world. He came to Israel for the world.

John 1, John 1, 10 or 12 tells us that he came unto his own. Who do you think that means? Who were his own? His own people.

His own countrymen. His own fellow Jews. And his own, same ones to whom he came, received him not. They rejected him. They crucified him.

But unto those who received him, to him gave he the power to become the sons of God. And that includes, of course, everybody. So this is a, this is a tremendously important thing. Did I see a hand a minute ago?

Yeah, Frank. Did, did, did, did, did, did, did Paul's conversion, did that take place after Peter went to Cornelius?

[25 : 25] Yes. And saw the, yes. Yes. Come upon the Gentiles. Yeah. It was later then. Yes. Well, no, wait, wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I was thinking of Peter and his ministry.

And Peter had some active ministry, of course, before Paul ever came on the scene. Well, particularly in Jerusalem. And then in chapter 8. But, in chapter 8, chronologically, yeah, chronologically, I think we've got a correct chronology here.

Peter's activity in chapter 8 was very significant. And then Paul is converted in, in chapter 9. In chapter 10, we have the conversion of Cornelius.

And that was under Peter's ministry. And it was really, really important, really important that Peter be instrumental in, in leading the way in this thing with Gentiles.

Because, Paul didn't have the credentials. He didn't have the history. In fact, let me put it this way. Maybe this will help clarify things.

[26 : 42] The Apostle Paul was not qualified to be an apostle to Israel. Even though he himself was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin.

He wasn't qualified. Because the qualifications for being an apostle of Christ to Israel is given in Acts chapter 1 when they replaced when they replace Judas who betrayed the Lord and then later went out and hung himself.

And what that did was it left him with 11 apostles. And they obviously had a constraint about replacing him.

And I don't think they were acting without authority because the text makes it clear that these 11 men who are going to replace Judas were filled with the Spirit.

And when you're filled with the Spirit you don't do stupid things. You do what the Spirit of God wants. And they ended up choosing Matthias to take the place of Judas.

[27 : 54] And they said that the qualifications were they stated this right there in Acts 1 you can look it up if you want that in order for them to select a successor they had to choose from someone who had been involved with and familiar with the three year earthly ministry that Christ had while he was here on earth.

In other words they couldn't pick some Johnny come lately who wasn't personally acquainted with Christ who hadn't heard his teachings who hadn't seen his miracles they needed somebody who had been exposed to the earthly ministry of Christ and there were a number of people who had been not just the eleven but a number so out of that number they chose Matthias and replaced him used him to replace Judas now they've got twelve again so Paul would not have been qualified to be an apostle to Israel because he was not privy to the ministry of Christ as far as we know as far as the biblical record is concerned Paul the apostle or Saul of Tarsus probably never set eyes on Jesus of Nazareth until he was confronted by him on the road to Damascus because if he did it isn't recorded anywhere in scripture and there is no indication that Saul of Tarsus knew anything about

Jesus of Nazareth other than what he heard about him but there's no reason to believe that he saw his miracles heard his teachings etc so that was necessary if you were going to be a replacement for Judas and I think that's made quite clear so what we've got here with the selection of Paul Saul of Tarsus is the introduction of an entirely new thing and who is going to pave the way for it it won't be Paul like I said he was lacking the status and the credentials it's going to be Peter Peter solidly entrenched as one of the twelve commonly accepted as the chief spokesperson of the twelve individually selected by Christ to whom he said he would give the keys of the kingdom and by the way that's not the same thing as the keys of the church that's entirely different keys to the kingdom had to do with an earthly ministry and Peter

Peter is used to pave the way and open the door to the Gentiles how and when was he going to do that Cornelius Acts chapter 10 Cornelius was a Roman army officer a Gentile you recall the story the sheet let down from heaven Peter was told to go to this man Peter says I'm not going this guy is not even a Jew and the sheet came down three times and the message was Peter you are supposed to do this and Peter said I don't understand anything about this but I'm going to go and when they it's a day's journey to get there from Caesarea to Joppa and when they get there Cornelius welcomes him into his home and right away Peter is very uncomfortable he walks into this man's house this Gentile house where no respectable

Jew is supposed to be and he looks around and the place is filled with goyim Gentiles and Peter feels really uncomfortable in fact he even says you know how it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to have anything to do with y'all and here I am I had this vision and this command that I'm supposed to come here and I didn't want to come and I don't have any idea why I'm here or what this is all about I can't figure out what's going on and Cornelius told Peter about the vision he had and how he was to be sent for this man called Peter and Peter said Peter will tell you what you need to know and Peter says well golly what is this all about and then he told them about

[32 : 36] Jesus death burial and resurrection how God sent him and Cornelius says if I may paraphrase Cornelius says that's it that's it that's what I needed to know this is the word of life I always knew there was something didn't know what it was and Cornelius had been praying about this and as you read the text there it is very apparent what Cornelius was praying about he was praying for light praying for information and it's strange that the angel that appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter why didn't the angel give him the message the angel doesn't know the message this is for humans only as the songwriter said and when we sing redemption story they will fold their wings angels fold their wings for angels never knew the glory that our salvation brings angels don't know the story of redemption because they are not subjects of redemption there is no redemption for angels it's only for humans and when

Peter preached that message to Cornelius all of those people there believed and the spirit of God came upon them as it did on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached there and that was God's proof confirmation to Peter that he was in this thing just like he was in it on the day of Pentecost and Peter is dumbstruck because these are Gentiles and they are speaking in languages that they did not know and Peter is used of God to open the door to the Gentiles to the non-Jews striking stunning stuff and then right here after you find Paul being called of God and he is called and the only one who is called the apostle to the

Gentiles that becomes his official title well maybe I gave you more than what the question asked for why Paul why not one of the twelve do you see now why Paul and why not one of the twelve as you put it all together it becomes crystal clear but I have to tell you and I'm not I'm not proud to tell you this I'm somewhat embarrassed these truths went right over my head never occurred to me for the first fifteen years after I became a believer I never saw this and now I wonder how did I miss that well I guess you know Dana do you know what tribe Judas and Matthias were funded what tribe Judas no I don't think it's given Judas Judas

Iscaiot he was a kind of an odd man out Judas Judas was the only one of the original twelve apostles that was not from Galilee he was the only one he was from Iscaiot which was not in Galilee and so you know he might have been kind of like an odd man out to begin with I don't know but he was also the treasurer of the group because people made contributions and supported the twelve apostles and Christ as they conducted their ministry and Judas was the one who was the treasurer of the group and he was the one that would dispatch money for buying food stuff like that so