

# ***Justified by Faith in Jesus***

***International Bible Lesson***

**Galatians 2:15-21**

**Sunday, February 5, 2012**

*“Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16b—KJV).*

*“We, too, have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be put right with God through our faith in Christ, and not by doing what the Law requires. For no one is put right with God by doing what the Law requires” (Galatians 2:16b—GNB).*

*“And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law” (Galatians 2:16b—NRSV).*

In spite of having disobeyed God, believers can “be justified” by God; which means, “Declared and prepared to be in a right relationship with God.” Paul, and the other apostles, taught that in order to come into a right relationship with God people only need to place their faith in Jesus the Messiah. When people understand that they have sinned and deserve to spend eternity separated from God, and when they also learn that because of Jesus’ sacrificial death God can justly and mercifully forgive them and welcome them into His family, they often bow before God with loving and thankful hearts. Born into a new life by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, they long to live right with God forever; therefore, Jesus comes to help them by living within them (Galatians 2:20).

Sadly, in Paul’s day, some “false teachers” taught a “different gospel” (see Galatians 1:6-7). They taught that to be justified people needed to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and in addition perform “the works of the law.” After Paul moved to begin a new church, these teachers often went into the churches Paul left behind, and they began “to pervert the gospel of Christ.” Their teaching was not good news, for they taught that Paul’s gospel was defective and that to be saved believers needed to circumcise their males, abstain from certain foods, stop eating with Gentiles, celebrate special feast days, and perform other religious rituals. In his letters, Paul opposed these “false believers.”— © Copyright 2012 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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# **Thinking Further**

1. Why should a sinner want to be justified? How can a sinner be justified?

2. What are “the works of the law”?

3. What do believers do after they are justified?

4. Who did Paul “live to” and what did he “live by” (see Galatians 2:19-20)?

5. Where does Jesus Christ live?

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