

**reality is not optional**

*A Biblical guide to theology, economics  
and life in general*

---

**false brethren in acts 15 and galatians 2**

Posted on [February 16, 2013](#)

*Act 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

*Act 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

These events in Acts 15 is parallel to events described in Galatians 2. In Galatians 2, Paul is recounting the reasons he journeyed back to Jerusalem to meet with the church leaders. He writes of these “certain men”:

*Gal 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:*

He calls them false brethren. So we know they were representing themselves as brethren. It also appears from the Acts passage that they accept the authority of those in Jerusalem. Why else would a journey to Jerusalem solve the issue? Even if the journey was intended to satisfy Paul’s converts, and not the false brethren, the false brethren must have accepted the authority of those in Jerusalem, how else are they convincing those who are Paul’s converts and who do accept the authority of Jerusalem?

Once in Jerusalem, two more contextual clues tell us about these false brethren. The first is that an entirely new contingent arises preaching the exact same thing. Luke, the author of Acts, calls them believers:

*Act 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*

Compare the teachings of this sect of “Pharisees which believed” to the teachings of these “false brethren”. We know from Gal 2:3 that it had to do with circumcision, and we know from Acts 15 that it definitely was about needing circumcision to be saved:

*Act 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

The next piece of evidence is that Peter claims the men were from the congregation headed by him and James. These very men were believers who communed with Peter and James:

*Act 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:*

I had a conversation with a pastor who claimed that these were heretics that were casted out by Peter and James, but the text in no way indicates this. The text indicates that they are still accepted (just not their proselytizing Paul's converts), not to mention that a contingent of James and Peter mentioned in Acts 15:5 preached the exact same thing and are considered believers. The men from Judea were brethren. Why does Paul call them false? Because Paul was extremely protective of his converts:

*Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:*

*Gal 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*

*Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

*Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

Paul states that even if he was preaching another gospel that they should not to believe him. He states that even an angel from heaven were preaching another gospel, not to believe him. Paul curses these people. Is it any stretch of the imagination to contend that he would call James and Peter's acolytes false brethren if they attempted to preach a different gospel to Paul's converts?

Note that Paul says the gospel they teach is "not another". This makes sense of James and Peter's converts. They are still teaching the death and resurrection of Christ (the gospel), only they are adding in conditions for salvation. Paul goes on to label the gospel being taught as the "Gospel of Christ", only perverted.

One further clue is that Galatians describes an incident well after the events in Acts 15 in which "men from James" came again to Antioch, but this time Peter is there. Peter, it seems, pre-emptively withdrawals from the Gentiles and the following happens:

*Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*

*Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*

Who is this "them which were of the circumcision"? It is the same as the men from James. What are they teaching and what do they believe? Could it have to do with circumcision? Why does Peter, a leader in the church, react to what these certain men would think? Paul refutes Peter to his face:

*Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

Peter was compelling Gentiles to be circumcised, through withdrawing from uncircumcised Gentiles. Paul links this to the gospel. Paul claims Peter did not live according to the truth of the Gospel. Paul goes on:

*...Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, 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...*

*Gal 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God...*

*Gal 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

Paul talks about Law and Works. This is how he is withstanding Peter to his face. So men from James came, and Peter responded by mimicking a gospel of law and works. Isn't this is a settled issue? Doesn't James and Peter teach salvation by faith alone and that works are dead? It is obvious that they did not. Both James and Peter, and their converts, seem to have been teaching something which Paul did not teach.

Paul spends Galatians 3 then explaining further that works and law are not required. With all this in mind, we can get a clear picture of who the false brethren were, where they came from, who their teachers were, and the extent they were affected by the Jerusalem council (not much).

★ Like

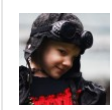
Be the first to like this.

#### Related

[basic questions on acts 15](#)  
In "Bible"

[galatians 2 – Paul writes incoherently](#)  
In "Church History"

[why was paul persecuted and by whom](#)  
In "Bible"



#### About christopher fisher

The blog is meant for educational/entertainment purposes. All material can be used and reproduced in any length for any purpose as long as I am cited as the source.

[View all posts by christopher fisher →](#)

This entry was posted in [Dispensationalism](#), [History](#), [Theology](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

## 49 Responses to *false brethren in acts 15 and galatians 2*



**Gamer Smith** says:

March 17, 2013 at 1:23 am

Can you talk about Galatians 3-5 in a post? I'm a little confused about the Abraham being justified by faith (Paul) vs Abraham being justified by faith and works (James). Thanks.

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher** says:

October 8, 2013 at 3:19 am

I apologize. Either I forgot about your request or didn't see it. My latest post is on this issue:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/how-could-both-paul-and-james-use-abraham-as-an-example/>

[Reply](#)

Pingback: [how was Paul hard to understand | reality is not optional](#)

Pingback: [galatians 2 – Paul writes incoherently | reality is not optional](#)

Pingback: [Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom even after he is risen | reality is not optional](#)

Pingback: [defining dispensationalism | reality is not optional](#)

Pingback: [paul was afraid of different heresies than the disciples | reality is not optional](#)

Pingback: [paul tells judaizers to castrate themselves | reality is not optional](#)



**carrierwave~** says:

December 1, 2013 at 3:50 pm

The \*same Gospel\* preached by Peter was also preached by Paul. Proof: Acts 15:7-11. Especially verse eleven. Those were “false brethren” as Paul stated. James stated they gave “NO SUCH COMMANDMENT” to anyone Jew or Gentile that would add works to the Gospel.

The Pharisees “which believed” does not necessitate these were actual “believers” and brethren in Christ. It was what they “believed” not that they were brethren (believers in Christ). They “believed” that one must be circumcised to be “saved”. They were not believers in Grace Salvation, therefore “false brethren”. I see no other option. The Gospel is the Gospel. 1Corinthians 15:1-4.

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher** says:

December 2, 2013 at 1:44 am

Sir,

Thank you for your thoughtful comment. I don't think the text fits that narrative very well. Allow me to explain.

You say Acts 15:7-11 is your proof. Acts 15:7-11 starts out with the Apostles and Elders “coming together to consider the matter”. This is circumcision and salvation (Acts 15:1). There is then much “disputing”. Why is there disputing if this is a settled matter? Shouldn't everyone know the gospel, two decades after Jesus has died? Who is arguing about what? Are both sides considered Christians?

This seems to be a drawn out disputation, which Peter then interrupts. If we flip to Galatians, we find Paul detailing how he met in secret with Peter before the debates. Paul briefs Peter with what he is doing and the extent of his ministry. But then Paul then distances himself from Peter in the very same chapter at a later incident. Why does Paul reveal he met “secretively” with Peter? Why does then Paul turn against Peter in the next paragraph?

We flip back to Acts 15. Peter gives a rousing talk, explaining that the Gentiles are saved just like the Jews. Now, if my child says he “got big just like me” is that referring to the fact that he is my size now or is he referring to the process (“eating plenty eggs and vegetables”). In other words: is Peter saying the gentiles are “also saved” or is Peter saying the Gentiles are saved using the same process as us?

He then talks about the people that went out from them (how isn't this compelling evidence that the “false brethren” were part of Peter's church?). He then says:

Act 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such

commandment:

Does the context suggest more that the message or the audience is at issue with “to whom we gave no such commandment”? In other words, is Peter saying “we didn’t command these people or anyone to preach circumcision based faith”. Or is Peter saying, “yeah, these guys came from us but we never commanded them to preach ‘that’ to ‘you’.”

The resulting document is even more curious. It is addressed to Paul’s converts, and it reads as if it is a compromise to even ask the individuals to abstain from blood and sexual immorality:

Act 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

Act 15:29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

The quip about abstaining from things offered to idols directly contradicts Paul’s allowance of the act (1Co 10:25).

If we assume that Paul and Peter were preaching the same message, we hit all the problems I detailed in the original article. We then have to further understand why there was a huge dispute about this. We then have to explain the odd outcome, and Paul’s distancing himself from Peter who seemed to lapse (after arrival of people from James (Gal 2:12)). To force the same gospel really doesn’t fit the text.

Thanks.

[Reply](#)




---

**christopher fisher** says:

December 3, 2013 at 1:59 pm

Sir,

A few things of note: You need to keep in mind that this blog post is on the first page of any google results for related search terms. If you want to represent an alternative reading of Acts 15 or Gal 2, I suggest you focus on the text. You need to actually explain what is going on in the passages cited. I provided you a series of questions. I will list a more complete set:

Acts 15:

1. Who are these false brethren?
2. From where are they coming?
3. What do they believe?
4. Are they considered Christians?
5. Do they accept the authority of the twelve?
- 5a. If not, why do Christians accept their teachings?
- 5b. And also why is this matter upchanneled to the twelve?

- 5c. Are the false brethren teaching that the twelve endorse their message?
6. Do the Christians of Galatia already know the twelve's answer on the issue?
  - 6a. If not, why not?
7. Who disputes with Paul?
  - 7a. Do the disputers accept the authority of the twelve?
  - 7b. If the disputers are not the false brethren, then what became of the false brethren?
    - 7b1. And if so, why didn't Paul directly dispute with the false brethren?
8. What is the dispute about?
9. What is the resolution?
10. Who goes with Paul to find the answer?
  - 10a. If not the false brethren, then whatever happened to the false brethren?
11. What is the purpose of bringing this matter to Jerusalem?
  - 11a. Will the declaration of the twelve silence the false brethren?
12. On the way to Jerusalem, what does Paul declare?
  - 12a. Do the existing Christians see this as new and exciting news?
  - 12b. If so, why? If not, why does the text record this message? What is the purpose?
13. What happens when Paul reaches Jerusalem?
14. The new contingent of "believers" advocating circumcision, are they Christians?
15. Are they teaching the same things or different things than the false brethren?
16. Do these "believers" accept the authority of the twelve?
  - 16a. If not, why are they mentioned?
  - 16b. If so, why are they teaching that people "keep the commandments of Moses"?
17. Do these "believers" have influence in the church?
18. If the teaching of the twelve is clear, why are the elders assembling to consider the matter?
19. Are the "believers" part of the heavy dispute described in verse 7?
20. Why does Peter stand up to remind people about his outreach to the Gentiles?
  - 20a. Was Peter still actively ministering Gentiles?

20b. Does this suggest the question is being debated only in the context of Gentile believers?

I will actually craft a complete set of questions regarding both Acts 15 and Galatians 2. But this is just to get you started thinking about the context of the events.

edit: The full list for Acts 15 can be found here: <http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/12/03/basic-questions-on-acts-15/>

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 2, 2013 at 5:21 pm

Thank you for your response. Sir, there is no other way to be “saved” but by GRACE. From Genesis to Revelation GRACE is the only “means” by which man can have peace and salvation with a Holy God. Peter in Acts 15:11 sums it up the Gentiles are saved by GRACE (means and process) as well as the Jews. What “process” are you alluding to by which the Jews gospel is preached other than by GRACE? Works (law) plus GRACE? What “gospel” did Peter preach? Was it FAITH in Jesus Christ and the Gospel or law plus GRACE? Peter preached the “death burial and resurrection” at each instance in Acts to the Jews. Peter plainly gives the “process” and the “means” of salvation; faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 15:7-11

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher says:**

December 3, 2013 at 12:01 am

That is an interesting assertion: that individuals were saved by Grace in the Old Testament. It deserves its own due diligence. But a good rule of Biblical interpretation is to not let our prejudices override what the text says.

Even if it were true that individuals were saved by grace in the OT, it would not explain the problems with the events described in Acts. There is a hearty debate that is described. Who is debating and what are they debating? Who are the actors on each side? Why the cryptic resulting letter which forbids certain actions? Why does Paul boast that nothing was added to his ministry (in the context of circumcision no less)? Why does Paul feel emboldened to call out Peter on Peter’s later actions? Why is Peter influenced by people from James, who in turn see a separation between Jews and Gentiles? What was James teaching them? Did Jesus teach that same separation? If not, why does Jesus claim he is only sent to the “lost sheep of Israel” and why do his 12 disciples have an aversion to Gentiles (Peter in Acts 10)?

There is no better way to understand this text than to see that a large contingent of Early Jewish Christians, with incredible pull, were advocating Gentile circumcision. In fact, this is precisely what almost every Biblical scholar accepts. Usually those who advocate something different are evangelicals trying to push a specific pet theology. It just doesn’t fit the text.

Circumcision, to this point, was not part of the forefront of the ministry of the 12 apostles because they did not evangelize the Gentiles (they stayed in Jerusalem after Jesus had died). The 12 apostles disciplined Jews, and the circumcision issue was moot. It was not until Paul started preaching Jew-Gentile equality that the 12 apostles had to deal with this issue.

If you read the bitterness and hostility with which Paul treats the 12 disciples in Galatians, you can feel the tension between the two ministries. Paul establishes his authority is not from the twelve, but points out that the twelve endorsed his ministry (as to not make himself a heretic), but then he describes his dominance over Peter. Peter himself writes a cryptic note about Paul, and it is precisely about faith salvation. The dynamics are there to read.

See also (edited 6:51 PM):

Jesus only came to the Jews:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/was-jesus-sent-to-the-jews-only/>

Paul's framing of the events in Galatians:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/understanding-galatians-chapter-1-part-1/>

Peter's saying that Paul is hard to understand:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/05/12/how-was-paul-hard-to-understand/>

Some thoughts on Peter's revelation in Acts 10:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/06/17/peters-vision-in-acts/>

Paul's boasting about Peter not adding to his gospel:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/06/21/does-galatians-2-7-indicate-two-gospels/>

A scholar's take on the incident:

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/ehrman-on-the-incident-at-antioch/>

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~** says:

December 3, 2013 at 3:10 am

My friend, you are grossly reading into these texts it seems at every turn—bitterness and rivalry between Paul and the other apostles? Simply gross exaggerations and attempts to build a spurious 2 salvation Gospel doctrine out of the book of Acts. Granted, you have endless materials to draw from as there are multitudes of historical records, who inspired by the enemy, hate the true Gospel of salvation and have perverted and “wrested the scriptures”. (which one or several have bewitched you?) You never answered the simple question—What was Peter’s “gospel” message? For that matter, what was Paul’s? Which Gospel did Philip preach to the eunuch in Acts 8 when Philip “preached unto him Jesus” from the Book of Isaiah? What “Gospel” did Peter preach to the Gentile Cornelius and family/friends in Acts 10? Why do we find Paul preaching the “faith which he onced destroyed” according to his own testimony. (Gal 1:23) Which “Gospel” did he destroy, and what “Gospel” did he preach afterwards? Apparently the same one he once destroyed? lol! The saints in “Judea glorified God” in Paul preaching a different Gospel? Tell us which “Gospel” was preached from “house to house and in the Temple” in Acts 5:42 and which Gospel was being preached in Acts 17:3? Please tell us!



**christopher fisher** says:

December 3, 2013 at 6:00 am

This is a very strange reply. I think you went crazy.

You seem to have missed the dozen or more points in the actual blog post and Biblical text that we are discussing (to remind you: it is Acts 15) that lend itself to two different gospels. Can you list my points? Can you answer them?

Instead you want to move to meta theological concepts and then force the text of Acts 15 into your narrative. This is a disingenuous approach. For intellectual honesty sake, can you explain why scholarship rejects your understanding of this text and endorses mine? This is an intellectual Turing Test.

I suspect the text is secondary to your teaching. You have a preconstrued understanding of what you want the Bible to be and then ignore the text. If you read my blog, I answer your other questions elsewhere. But Acts 15, Pal, it doesn't fit your theological framework. I suspect that is the real reason for your blowout.





**carrierwave~** says:

December 3, 2013 at 3:21 am

“But a good rule of Biblical interpretation is to not let our prejudices override what the text says.”  
Look in the mirror pal.

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher** says:

December 3, 2013 at 6:04 am

So... I am always one for a good bet. If we agree on neutral parties to judge, they can read the text and then decide if you or I have a better understanding. Is that a bet you want to take?

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/10/01/julian-simon-on-betting/>

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~** says:

December 3, 2013 at 1:59 pm

In otherwords, “he that has the most “intellectual toys” in the end wins.” In this world where satan is still “the god of this world”, truth will always be in the minority (increasingly so) and will always be until the Lord Jesus returns. 2Tim. 3:13 However, Scripture is final authority for truth seekers not “neutral parties”, (no such animal) You parade “scholarship” (your own included of course), “majority rule”, so-called “intellectual honesty”; now you wish to employ all the ground rules for a “debate”. Personally I don’t care what “dr. mess’um-up” has to say or “professor broad-belly”, or any on your “smarter-than-thou” checklist– worldly tactics don’t impress me, or God. 1Cor 1:18-31 (especially see verses 28-31 in your case). Climb down off your diploma and answer the questions I posed earlier, (What Gospel did Peter preach to Cornelius, Philips Gospel to the eunuch, what “Gospel” was preached and taught in Acts 5:42 and which Gospel was being preached in Acts 17:3? and then I will address “some” of your statements because of limited time.



**christopher fisher** says:

December 3, 2013 at 6:12 pm

The Bible was written to normal people. It is not a crazy idea for us to find a normal person to read it and tell us what it means. In fact, your resistance tells me that you yourself believe that a normal reading of the text suggests the mainstream understanding of Acts 15.

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~** says:

December 3, 2013 at 7:53 pm

Sir, if you are not able to read and discern the Word of God yourself–better take the biblical approach and do what the “Bereans” did; they were MORE NOBLE than those in Thessolonica; they heard the Word of God and searched the Scriptures daily THEMSELVES to see if those things were so. They didn’t need to go off to “professor lead-bottom” for the answer!! Normal reading? Mainstream? Historical “churchianity” is laden with heretics, and not God’s norm.



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 3, 2013 at 2:24 pm

Mr. Fisher, Adding to previously answered posts is just adding more clutter. I do not have the time or desire to go back and address your backdoor approach. Address the scriptures I posed please and answer the questions. It would seem more responsible to address exactly what Peter said in his preaching to find out what “gospel” he spoke to the people. Is that so hard for you? It would clear up a lot of questions. Same with Paul and the “gospel” he preached.

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher says:**

December 3, 2013 at 6:07 pm

Here is the point. When people look at our exchange, they are going to see me focusing on what Acts 15 and Gal 2 actually says. They will see you just trying to ignore the text and not deal with what the biblical text is communicating. I am doing you a favor by guiding you to give an effective narrative, one that considers the implications of the text. But instead you confirm my suspicions about you when you fail to deal with the text you purport to understand.

We can start a new discussion on actual teachings of the twelve. Good blog posts for that would be either the one on “the kingdom of God” or the one about Jesus’ teaching after he rose from the dead. Here is a hint: their ministry was not about individual salvation to heaven, nor was that Jesus’.

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 3, 2013 at 7:25 pm

We do not need to start a new discussion. When Jesus rose from the dead He emptied out “paradise” and “took captivity captive”—all the “souls” of O.T. saints are with the Lord Jesus in Heaven. Everyone who dies after the Lord’s resurrection whether Jew or Gentile their souls go either to Hades— or with the Lord. (heaven). So being “saved” is about eternal life and the “soul” going to be with the Lord. There is no other place for them to go. By the way, Acts has more than one chapter (Acts 15). It does not take a genius to find out what Peter preached to the people and what Paul preached. This morning I simply read the first 17 chapters of the Book of Acts. I marked every message Peter preached and the beginning of Paul’s ministry and preaching in those chapters. Their messages about “salvation” are THE SAME. They BOTH preached “WORD OF THE LORD”: Jesus and the Gospel, (the death, burial and resurrection) that He is the Son of God and through FAITH in His name one will by GRACE be “saved” and receive “remission of sins” and eternal life. You can read them for yourself. I don’t need to muddle up the Word of God with distortions that minister QUESTIONS and lead to contentions about the Law, which lead to more ungodliness and strife. CHECK IT OUT FOLKS—what the 12 apostles and Paul taught



**christopher fisher says:**

December 3, 2013 at 9:52 pm

Remember that time I said, “let’s just assume what you say is true, how do you deal with Acts 15?” And remember your response, because I don’t. You didn’t respond. Why is it that you want to take an event described in Acts 15 and Galatians 2 and then attempt to argue “the text doesn’t mean what it says because I have this theology from over at this other part of the Bible”. Your entire argument is that the text can’t mean what it says because of other concerns. If my words were emblazoned for all of eternity on the number one go-to site on the issue, I for one would try to make a better argument that deals with the events in question. Focus on the text.

Really, if you understood what was happening in Acts 15 you could quickly answer all my questions that I

listed. I actually completed a new blog post covering all of Acts 15. You are mentioned.

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/12/03/basic-questions-on-acts-15/>



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 4, 2013 at 1:32 am

Fish, In 17 chapters of Acts Luke records Peter preaching the same Gospel message that Paul did. Are you going to argue that 17 chapters of identical Gospel preaching by 2 apostles, Luke (or the Holy Ghost) falsely reported the truth because ONE chapter (15) seems to contradict it? Would not common sense first cause you to question your interpretation, or at least rethink some of what you preceive in just ONE chapter? If two things that are the SAME, how can you contend they are different? Is it because Jews are circumsized when they hear THE SAME Gospel and Gentiles are not? That does not change the Gospel message.



**christopher fisher says:**

December 4, 2013 at 1:43 am

Let us just pretend you are right. How then do we understand Acts 15? We do not just gloss over problems because we have formed a competing theory based on other evidence.

Your theory and the text of Acts 15 are two separate issues. They can be dealt with separately, but they have to both be dealt with. One does not override the other. We cant just ignore the text of Acts 15 because we want to assume something else is true.

About those previous chapters, my question to you is this:

Is there any other way, that you can imagine, to take the text rather than to claim that both the 12 disciples and Paul were both not teaching circumcision? I am not even asking for conspiracy theory scenarios, just answers involving normal human communication idioms (speaking and writing).



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 4, 2013 at 7:59 pm

I do not have to pretend anything. There is not one message preached by Paul or Peter in the book of Acts where circumsion was required as an add-on to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for people to be saved, Jew or Gentile. If you can find it and show me I will listen. Why do you keep ignoring this fact? Do you see circumsion in their messages? I agree with Paul the "certain men" were "false brethren". They certainly must have believed that THEIR OWN obedience to circumsion was what saved them. According to Luke when Paul and company arrived at Jerusalem they were "received of the CHURCH, and the APOSTLES and the ELDERS and they declared all things that God had done with them." However, a "certain sect" did not receive them; they claimed those Gentiles were NOT SAVED at all! Luke never called them brethren but "certain men", Paul called them "false brethren". I agree. The Apostles wrote letters to Antioch and did not even acknowledge them as "brethren" but called them "certain" who "troubled you" and were 'SUBVERTING' of the souls of the Gentiles! Peter stated these "certain men" were "TEMPTING GOD" by telling the Gentiles to "bear the yoke" that Peter HIMSELF could not bear! At every mention of the "certain men" their was a negative shadow cast upon them by the



**christopher fisher says:**

December 5, 2013 at 5:01 am

This blog post is about False Brethren in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. That is the only thing I will be discussing. You keep wanting the sidetrack the conversation. I think it is because you are uncomfortable with dealing

with the Biblical text.

For sake of discussion I have already said we can assume that Paul and James were preaching the same thing. How is assuming you are right the same thing as “ignoring your questions”? That’s ridiculous. My guess is that you are stressing out by the fact that even if your assumptions are right, the text still cannot be explained.

Even if Paul and James were teaching the exact same thing as each other that does explain or allow us to overlook Acts 15. It definitely complicates your narrative. There are a lot of unanswered questions, ones you say “you don’t have time for”, yet you have plenty of time to gloss over the questions and write narratives that ignore(!) the questions. Focus on the text.

Here are the first 11 questions which cover the first part of the chapter. Please try to answer:

1. Who are these false brethren?
2. From where are they coming?
3. What do they believe?
4. Are they considered Christians?
5. Do they accept the authority of the twelve?
- 5a. If not, why do Christians accept their teachings?
- 5b. And also why is this matter upchanneled to the twelve for a final word?
- 5c. If the false brethren did accept the authority of the twelve, were the false brethren teaching what the twelve taught?
- 5d. Did they think that they were teaching what the twelve taught?
- 5e. Are the false brethren teaching that the twelve endorse their message?
- 5f. Do the people that they are teaching believe that the twelve endorse the message?
6. Do the Christians of Galatia already know the twelve’s answer on the issue?
- 6a. If not, why not?
7. Who disputes with Paul?
- 7a. Do the disputers accept the authority of the twelve?
- 7b. If the disputers are not the false brethren, then what became of the false brethren?
- 7b1. And if so, why didn’t Paul directly dispute with the false brethren?
8. What is the dispute about?
9. What is the resolution?
10. Who goes with Paul to find the answer?
- 10a. If not the false brethren, then whatever happened to the false brethren?
11. What is the purpose of bringing this matter to Jerusalem?
- 11a. Will the declaration of the twelve silence the false brethren?
- 11b. If the false brethren did not accept the teaching of the twelve then why would the people (who were influenced by the false brethren) accept the twelve’s declaration about the issue?

Please tell us what is going on (without glossing over the details)? You can’t just ignore the text forever. I will just keep refocusing you. You seem to be more comfortable with the second half of Acts 15, so if you would like to start on those questions, I have them listed on this blog post (Q13 – 33):

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/12/03/basic-questions-on-acts-15/>



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 5, 2013 at 12:49 pm

The messages preached (the Gospel) in Acts are an integral part of the discussion regardless of what you say. You ignore them and say they are a “separate issue” LOL!! You claim there are TWO different “gospels” preached; THE MESSAGES PREACHED ARE RIGHT THERE TO EXAMINE!! I’m afraid? lol!

I have told you twice now I agree with Paul—the “certain men” are false brethren. Below is again what I see IN THE TEXTS of Acts 15.

I agree with Paul the “certain men” were “false brethren”. They certainly must have believed that THEIR OWN obedience to circumcision (the law) was what saved them. According to Luke when Paul and company arrived at Jerusalem they were “received of the CHURCH, and the APOSTLES and the ELDERS and they declared all things that God had done with them.” However, a “certain Pharisee sect” did NOT receive them; they even claimed those Gentiles at Antioch and those who came with Paul were NOT SAVED at all! Luke never called them brethren but “certain men”, Paul called them “false brethren”. I agree. The Apostles wrote letters to Antioch and did not even acknowledge them as “brethren” but called them “certain” who “troubled you” and were ‘SUBVERTING’ of the souls of the Gentiles! Peter stated these “certain men” were “TEMPTING GOD” by telling the Gentiles to “bear the yoke” that Peter HIMSELF could not bear! (the Mosaic law and ordinances) At every mention of these “certain men” there was a negative shadow cast! Luke, Paul, Peter, and James, the elders and ENTIRE CHURCH at Jerusalem had nothing good to say about them. To say they were in good standing would be FALSE. That is what I see in Acts 15 about the “certain men” a “sect” of the Pharisees.



**christopher fisher** says:

December 5, 2013 at 10:29 pm

A couple points on “false brethren”. You are responding to a blog post. Scroll up. Did I ever talk about how Paul uses the term “false brethren”? If you are going to try to claim victory by how you define “false brethren”, at least attempt to show that my understanding of the term is incorrect. A basic attempt would be nice.

When Paul uses the term “false brethren” there are a range of possibility on his meaning:

1. He could be calling these people “unsaved” and/or “heretical”
2. He could be saying “These Brothers in Christ who preach false things”
3. He could be saying “These Brothers in Christ who are dishonest”
4. He could be saying “These people who are not like you, who belong to a Jewish Christianity”

And the list goes on. That is how human language works. Even if Paul was using the term to mean “unsaved” and/or “heretical” it could be a non-literal use of name calling.

You are trying to win a point by just assuming you are right. In order to convince someone of something, it is important to know why they believe what they do. If someone believes that “false brethren” does not mean “unsaved”, you can’t just assume that “false brethren” means people are “unsaved”. That is disingenuous.

Keep this in mind. Here are a couple more direct questions you will ignore: does the term “false brethren” have to mean “unsaved” or “heretical”? Can it mean anything else in any context? For example, could I be justified in calling you a “false brother” because you are disingenuous and ignore what I say (what I say about the way Paul uses “false brethren” being a good example)? Is this a valid use of the term?

A further point about “false brethren”: this term is found only in Galatians. Many scholars (such as NT Wright) say that Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are two separate instances, two different events. This is a possibility, but I don’t believe it is the case. If this was true, show me using Acts any disparaging words against the “men from Judea”. Acts treats these men as fellow Christians, accepted in the Church. Acts 15 and Galatians 2 might be talking about two separate instances. If Paul was calling these individuals heretics, it would add weight to this claim!

If you answer only one question, answer this:

Can “false brethren” mean anything else besides “unsaved” or “heretic”? Yes or no?



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 6, 2013 at 12:00 am

The term “false brethren” is found TWICE in the KJV and identical Greek terms are used in each case. Once in Galatians 2:4 and in once in 2Cor.11:26. “ψευδάδελφος” In the Greek it is ONE WORD comprised of ‘compound words’ (two Greek terms) in English it is translated as “two words”. The first Greek word is “psuedo”; in the Greek this means a “pretender”, “erroneous”, “spurious”, “fake”. The second word “adelphos” translated “brother”. It’s root “delphos”– Greek meaning “the womb” denoting “a birth”. Brothers in Christ are those who have been “born again” “birthed” by the same agent: the Holy Spirit. A “false brethren” is one who is a “pretender”, “fake,” “spurious” brother.in Christ. It can only mean an “unsaved” person pretending to be a saved person. Paul is correct in labeling the (“certain men”) “false brethren) Again, in Acts a shadow is cast from every mention of them Peter said they were “tempting God” putting a “yoke” (Mosaic law and ordinances) on the Gentiles that “NEITHER” the Jewish “fathers or “we could bear”. Peter admitted being unable to keep the law himself , proving circumcision included could NOT SAVE ANYONE. James called them called them men who were “subverting souls” and “troubing” Christians! I call that “disparaging words”!



**christopher fisher says:**

December 6, 2013 at 12:58 am

This is actually a much better response then you have been giving in the past. You looked at the term, used concise and direct argumentation. You seem to answer my main question directly (although in the middle of your text). You answer “no, false brethren cannot mean anything other than ‘unsaved’” (paraphrase). Thank you for that.

But I do not think there is a clear case to be made that “false brethren” can only mean “people pretending to be Christians”. Although this is the strongest case you have made yet (and I think there is nothing dishonest about thinking the word means “false Christian”), if we want to look at the word usage in Greek then I think there is a better understanding in what Strong’s dictionary states: pretended associate. This would be like a back-stabber. Paul uses this and says “spy out our liberty”. It sounds like these people came in, pretending to be nice to Paul and the Gentiles, and then subtly began teaching the law. I actually think that is the best understanding of the word.

In addition, in my previous post I pointed out that name calling doesn’t have to be literal. If the phrase meant “unsaved”, the way language works is that it is flexible to the context. Although I do think “backstabber” is a better understanding then figurative use.

The point is not that you are “wrong” about what the word means, but the point is that there are legitimate alternative meanings of the word, as with most words in any language.

My last point is that if “false brethren” means “unsaved” then this might point me to believe the common view that Acts 15 and Galatians 2 are two separate events. How would you handle this?

As to the disparaging remakes in Acts 15:10. It is going to be hard to have a conversation with you until you answer some of my questions about Acts 15. Peter is addressing some people after some sort of debate. To talk about Acts 15:10 we need to know the following:

The apostles and elders come together to consider the matter: do any of them take the opposing side to Paul or Peter? Who are the parties disputing in Acts 15:7? What are both sides debating? Are both sides Christians? If so, do they accept the “men from Judea” as Christians? If not, why are they debating Christians on the issue? Why doesn’t Peter or James or Paul call these disputers “false brethren” or disfellowship them? What was the common understanding of the issues before the apostles and elders came together? Who exactly is Peter talking to who “tempt God” (the false brethren, the masses, the

Pharisees) and when did they do it? To understand Acts 15:10, we need to understand the context in which it is said.

Most your “disparaging words” are minor rebukes of the perpetrators, as we would expect in a letter to the people that were offended. Notice how James includes his authority over the perpetrators as a given? That should give us hint who these guys were.

Your best point on disparaging words is found in Acts 15:24. But in Acts 15:24, “subverting your souls” can be better translated as “upsetting your mind/body”. Americans have a very different understanding of the word “soul” than the Hebrews did.

Here is one article on it: <http://goddidntsaythat.com/2012/01/18/how-to-love-the-lord-your-god-part-3-heart-and-soul/>

Thank you for answering my direct question.



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 6, 2013 at 1:39 pm

I am going to start at the bottom of your last post. I do not know or care where you get your Greek definitions. Mr.Strong, inspite of his exhaustive work with Greek and Hebrew texts is for the most part a liberal. He was on a translation committee for the modernizing of ancient languages and uses the corrupted Wescott and Hort manuscripts many times. If you know anything about this, they (Wescott and Hort) have ALWAYS leaned to the LEFT (liberal) using ONLY 2 manuscripts when controversy arose between the 5,000 extant (existing) manuscript coppies available. These two are: the “Vaticanus and Siniaticus” (both are incomplete copies with many books of the Bible missing from them!) There are more than 64,000 “ommissions” of words, verses and changes to the meaning of the texts where the KJV “Bysantine and T.R. disagreed with the Vanticanus and Siniaticus. When Strong gives definitions in his dictionary of the Greek he was honest enough to always use the CLOSEST GREEK translation of the Greek \*BIBLE USAGES\* of a word “FIRST” when he lists definitons. Looking at your choice of Strong’s “definitions” you have run to the last one!! However, Strong ALWAYS repeats the CLOSEST Greek definition so the reader does not stray any farther AWAY from the CLOSEST synonyms available which reads, “FALSE BRETHREN” Since there is only 2 (two) times the word is used in scripture.



**christopher fisher says:**

December 6, 2013 at 10:28 pm

It doesnt matter what direction Strong leaned. Was this a Greek word in the Greek language... or is this some type of new concoction that Paul coined? If your argument is hinged on an inflexible meaning of a word, I think you need a basic understanding in how languages works. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek\\_qoqvfbqE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek_qoqvfbqE)



**christopher fisher says:**

December 9, 2013 at 6:22 am

A few final thoughts on ‘false brethren’:

1. Paul was an Aramaic speaking Jew who wrote in Greek to a Greek audience. Paul did not invent the Greek language, nor did he coin the word “false brethren”. When trying to ascertain the meaning of the word, any word, we should use caution when trying to force meanings onto them (especially when other people object and our own translation of the word enhances our own theological premises).



2. When looking at the word's roots, we need to remember that even those root phrases themselves have varied meanings. Brother, in almost all (if not all) cultures, means a close associate. To try to say that brother can only mean Christian is not supported by the Bible nor by the natural understanding of the word.

3. I listed out half a dozen possible alternative meanings.

- A Christian who says false things.
- A Christian who is intellectually dishonest.
- Someone pretending to be a blood relative.
- A backstabber.
- Someone pretending to be a Christian
- Some who thinks they are Christian but is heretical (possibly your definition)

And the list goes on.

4. Word morphology, natural word uses, and cultural idioms do not allow strict definitions of words. As in the video to which I linked, "stationary" has nothing to do with a monk's stationary writing desk. Sometimes the root of a word has nothing to do with the word itself. The context of a word determines its meaning. This is the same for other words like "faith", "gospel", and "saved" (I notice you ignored my previous question on the issue). Human language does not work in the realm of static and inflexible meanings to words. No one, not even you, has the magical translation ability (clairvoyance) to claim that they know the one true meaning.

5. I pointed out that even if "false brethren" means exactly what you claim then you have to show two additional things.

First, you need to show Paul was not using a non-serious ad hominem attack. Paul could be calling them names that he did not take literally. Why? Because he was mad at them.

Second, you need to show that Acts 15 and Galatians 2 are the same event. If "false brethren" only means unsaved individuals then I see no reason why Acts 15 and Galatians 2 are the same event. In fact, this is a common view, a view I reject because of how I think Galatians 2 fits into Acts 15. In other words, even if you are right then you are wrong.

6. As an afterthought, your refusal to allow for different understandings of "false brethren" (a word used only twice in the Bible) shows that you are highly unreasonable. It shows why you tend to reject the context of Acts 15 in favor of your self-defined meanings of other words in the text (such as "Faith", "Soul", and "Purified", etc.). And when you go on rants about fancy-pants scholars and professors and claim some sort of crazy academic conspiracy about Acts 15, it shows you are slightly unhinged as well. Not to mention you also dismiss "normal people" as "biased". I guess only you live in your own private world and only you can figure out the events of Acts 15/Gal 2.

---

Pingback: [basics questions on acts 15 | reality is not optional](#)

---

Pingback: [the acts 15 narrative | reality is not optional](#)

---



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 6, 2013 at 4:04 pm

Mr.Fisher, you said this:

"Your best point on disparaging words is found in Acts 15:24. But in Acts 15:24, "subverting your souls" can be better translated as "upsetting your mind/body". Americans have a very different understanding of the word "soul" than the Hebrews did."



No, The “strongest” REBUKE came from Peter’s lips in Acts 15:9-10. FIRST Peter explains HIS POSITION on “being saved” or as he stated: “PURIFYING THEIR SOULS BY FAITH”. To me this is the MOST IMPORTANT BIBLE TRUTH in Acts 15! Especially dealing with the WHOLE issue you are propagating, that the “overseers and apostles” at Jerusalem were teaching a “DIFFERENT GOSPEL” than Paul was at Antioch. Peter plainly states: “PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US (Jews,) and THEM (Gentiles)–”PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH”. (no circumscion add-on!) Right here, plain as day, Peter declares “FAITH ALONE” is how JEWS are SAVED and ALSO how the Gentiles at Antioch are SAVED! I want to remind people what the Bible says; that being SAVED is a SPIRITUAL BIRTH ONLY. Romans 8: and 2Cor.5:4 clearly points this out; our BODIES are STILL in a corruptible state while our “SPIRITS” have been “made alive” (born again). And I must also point out the Greek word “soul” is used interchangeably with “spirit” in the Greek many times and is explained by the context. In this case of “PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS” referred to in Acts 15:9-10 it is referring to the “SPIRIT SALVATION operation of being “born again”.

Further, Peter is directly rebuking the “sect of the Pharisees” in Acts 15:10 “NOW THEREFORE WHY TEMPT \*YE\* GOD..” This is a serious OFENCE! Mat 4:7, Acts 5:9. In Acts 5:9, tempting God brought the death of 2 individuals! This is MUCH WORSE than subverting human souls! You are IN GOD’S FACE when you “TEMPT GOD!” This brings another point out. The disputing was done NOT in verse 6! For this was when the “apostles and overseers came together for to CONSIDER” the matter. Greek εἰδέναι That Greek word is to “know”. “to be aware of” or “behold” (look at). There is no implication in this Greek word where the apostles and elders “disputed” with one another. The disputing began in verse 7. The ONLY ONES disputing “circumscion” for salvation was the “sect” of Pharisees! This was when Peter stood up and addressed the whole assembly during the “dispute” (see verse Acts 15:12). He said they were “TEMPTING GOD” adding circumscion the law for salvation. If you add JUST ONE OF THE LAWS, you MUST ADD ALL OF THE LAW!

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 6, 2013 at 7:28 pm

I would like to add a note to this post in Acts 15:9-10. You will notice Peter comes from BOTH SIDES of the issue to make it completely clear what he was saying. First, verse 9, “And put NO DIFFERENCE between us and them, purifying THEIR HEARTS by FAITH” Peter approaches it from the GENTILES POSITION and then he goes to the JEWS POSITION and clearly states in verse 11: “But WE (Jews) believe that through the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ WE shall be saved EVEN AS THEY. FAITH AND GRACE are the ONLY requirements needed to “believe on” the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Praise God! If you can find “circumscion” being taught to either group YOU ARE A miracle-man! (not).

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher says:**

December 6, 2013 at 10:40 pm

If you are so certain of what is happening here (and you paint yourself as being so in your numerous long posts that took a lot of time to write)... then why don't you answer the basic questions I ask about the text? Do you still not have time?

As to your understanding of teaching the “same gospel” ... you are painted into a weird world in which language operates on an entire different planet. Two people can both say “our hearts are purified by faith” and yet believe circumcision saves. Why are the “masses” instantly pleased? The sect of Pharisees are arguing “for circumcision”. But this quip makes them drop the entire rallying point and debate topic? Your understanding of the text is forced. Very forced. Answer my questions about the text, so people can know who you think is debating what, there positions, and who they are treated by each other. Notice also, James and Peter are addressing “the sect of Pharisees” who you say arent saved, yet you claim that when Peter says “we are saved like them”, “they are like us”, that he is talking to unbelievers! The text suggests something opposite of what you claim. That is why I will again refocus you to the text. Answer my questions. Your narrative makes no sense. That is why no one believes it.

<http://christopherfisher.wordpress.com/2013/12/03/basic-questions-on-acts-15/>



**christopher fisher** says:

December 6, 2013 at 11:02 pm

Here is a new idea. Maybe I will start doing to you what you are doing to me. I will start claiming that false brethren can only mean false siblings. Paul was dealing with people who were pretending to have the same parents as him. That's what the Greek word means? Right. And Peter taught that everyone had to believe that they would have a lot of children, and this would save them. After all, that was Abraham's gospel (Gal 3:8). That is the faith Abraham had (Heb 11:18). In order to have a real conversation, you need to stop being silly. Ok?



**carrierwave~** says:

December 6, 2013 at 11:54 pm

"Two people can both say "our hearts are purified by faith" and yet believe circumcision saves."

New Testament Grace Salvation in Jesus Christ makes your statement entirely FALSE and an impossibility. Circumcision is a WORK and is not of FAITH. It is a Mosaic ordinance that could not save anyone. If circumcision could save you could not call it FAITH. Paul makes it plain that no works of the Law saves anyone—Read Galatians 3. I am afraid you are still in kindergarten concerning the doctrines of Grace in the Bible. ( I am sorry, but to continue to talk doctrine with a person who does not yet know or understand the difference between Law and Grace, Faith and Works is pointless.

[Reply](#)



**christopher fisher** says:

December 7, 2013 at 2:06 am

Alright. I have faith that I am going to Tennessee. I am going in a plane. Other people also have faith that they are going to Tennessee, they are taking a POV or rental car. Yeah, two people can have faith and have different methodology. One thing is that the text does not specify what the faith is in. Explain to me the object of that faith. Was that the faith Abraham had that he would have kids?

You are being silly again.

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~** says:

December 7, 2013 at 5:48 pm

"You are being silly again".

When it comes to spiritual matters concerning God's plan of salvation and a person's eternal destiny, you may think this is some sort of game—I DON'T. God makes the rules; YOU DON'T. God's rule Book states how a man or woman may only obtain salvation.

Jesus said, "...I am the WAY the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by ME". John 14:6 This completely destroys any OTHER attempts or modes of travel other than the only ONE God has designated to eternal life. There are over 99 verses in the Book of John that states "FAITH IN the Lord Jesus Christ" is God's only way to eternal life. Jesus also said, "...He that entereth not by the DOOR into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a THIEF and a ROBBER." John 10:1. John 10:7-9 Jesus states: "... I AM the DOOR: by ME if any man enter in, HE SHALL BE SAVED". You have dismissed the fact that Peter had spent more than 3 years hearing and seeing first hand these same words taught to him by

the Lord Jesus Himself over and over again. In spite of your inability to read and understand Acts 15:7-11 Peter clearly knows and states what the only OBJECT of his own FAITH is and that which Jesus Himself has prescribed for both Jews and Gentiles.

Your refusal to allow or allow to use any other scriptures outside Acts 15 and Galatians 2 proves your innate inability to rightly dividing the Word of God and discern the truth properly and have no authority whatsoever teaching spiritual concepts about salvation as a result. You also abide in a dangerous position in rejecting the Word of God itself, claiming Paul's grace writings to be "tainted" and untrustworthy which Jesus Himself taught to him by special "revelation" in Sinai of Arabia, probably at Mount Sinai where Moses also received the Law. Yes, you are in danger. I therefore withdraw from you.

1Tim.6:3-5

Have a nice eternity,

carrierwave~



**christopher fisher** says:

December 7, 2013 at 8:59 pm

A couple of points. I didn't withdraw from the other issues. I told you to post them on a more relevant post... and THEN I SUGGESTED TWO. You were the one afraid to post there. Second, you definitely ignored my question on if your previous verses could be taken any other way. I quote:

About those previous chapters, my question to you is this:

"Is there any other way, that you can imagine, to take the text rather than to claim that both the 12 disciples and Paul were both not teaching circumcision?"

So you didn't want to talk about being saved or grace or faith in the previous verses and you refused to answer questions about YOUR OWN proof texts. Amazing intellectual honesty you have.



**christopher fisher** says:

December 7, 2013 at 2:12 am

Let's pretend two people read Pride and Prejudice. They get to the chapter (I don't know if you read the book) where Mr Darcy proposes to Elizabeth the first time. Pretend the two people have a conversation about the events, and one person insists that Elizabeth actually accepted Mr Darcy's proposal. The first person keeps pointing out that the narrative makes no sense, and the second keeps saying that Elizabeth accepted the proposal. How would the first person convince him otherwise? I would think that the best way is to go through the text asking specific questions, making them focus on the text.

I am asking you a list of specific questions about the events in Acts. Please focus on the text by answering the questions. You had enough time to answer the questions 50 times or more by now, but you just don't want to. You are the person insisting that Elizabeth accepted the proposal, and the easiest way to convince you otherwise, you ignore. I think you are being deliberate. I offered to answer similar questions from you about the text (but you ignored that too). Here are the questions again:

Acts 15:

1. Who are these false brethren?
2. From where are they coming?
3. What do they believe?

4. Are they considered Christians?
5. Do they accept the authority of the twelve?
- 5a. If not, why do Christians accept their teachings?
- 5b. And also why is this matter upchanneled to the twelve for a final word?
- 5c. If the false brethren did accept the authority of the twelve, were the false brethren teaching what the twelve taught?
- 5d. Did they think that they were teaching what the twelve taught?
- 5e. Are the false brethren teaching that the twelve endorse their message?
- 5f. Do the people that they are teaching believe that the twelve endorse the message?
6. Do the Christians of Galatia already know the twelve's answer on the issue?
- 6a. If not, why not?
7. Who disputes with Paul?
- 7a. Do the disputers accept the authority of the twelve?
- 7b. If the disputers are not the false brethren, then what became of the false brethren?
- 7b1. And if so, why didn't Paul directly dispute with the false brethren?
8. What is the dispute about?
9. What is the resolution?
10. Who goes with Paul to find the answer?
- 10a. If not the false brethren, then whatever happened to the false brethren?
11. What is the purpose of bringing this matter to Jerusalem?
- 11a. Will the declaration of the twelve silence the false brethren?
- 11b. If the false brethren did not accept the teaching of the twelve then why would the people (who were influenced by the false brethren) accept the twelve's declaration about the issue?
12. On the way to Jerusalem, what does Paul declare?
- 12a. Do the existing Christians see this as new and exciting news?
- 12b. If so, why? If not, why does the text record this message? What is the purpose?
13. What happens when Paul reaches Jerusalem?
14. The new contingent of "believers" advocating circumcision, are they Christians?
15. Are they teaching the same things or different things than the false brethren?
16. Do these "believers" accept the authority of the twelve?
- 16a. If not, why are they mentioned?
- 16b. If so, why are they teaching that people "keep the commandments of Moses"?
17. Do these "believers" have influence in the church?
18. If the teaching of the twelve is clear, why are the elders assembling to consider the matter?
19. Are the "believers" part of the heavy dispute described in verse 7?
20. Why does Peter stand up to remind people about his outreach to the Gentiles?
- 20a. Was Peter still actively ministering Gentiles?
- 20b. Does this suggest the question is being debated only in the context of Gentile believers?
21. Do verses 7-9 suggest a recent change in position regarding the Gentiles?
- 21a. Does the text imply widespread acceptance or rejection of this change?
22. To whom is this monologue being directed?
- 22a. Are they Christians?
- 22b. Are they debating directly against Peter and James (implying considerable sway)?
- 22c. What position are they taking?
- 22d. Do Peter and James consider them heretics?
- 22e. Do they ever accept the position of Peter and James?
- 22f. Does that acceptance cover only Gentile requirements or Jews as well?
23. In verse 12, why does Paul have to talk about the Gentiles to the "masses"?
- 23a. Does this suggest that the Gentiles are being widely excluded from fellowship by early Jewish Christians?
24. When James stands up to speak, who is he convincing and what is he convincing them about?
25. In verse 19, why is James declaring that his people should "trouble them not"?
- 25a. Is this a declaration that James' people will do their thing and let the Gentiles do their own?
26. Why does James' add to abstaining from idols, fornication, and blood?
27. How are the apostles and elders "pleased" by this?

- 27a. If the pronouncement is against circumcision, and this topic was highly debated, why would a pronouncement against circumcision please the critics?
- 27b. Was this pronouncement about only the Gentiles or the Jews also?
- 27b1. If not, then why is the resulting letter written only to the Gentiles (verse 23)?
28. Why is the resulting letter not written to the Jews of Galatia?
29. Does the letter suggest that the twelve did not command people to teach circumcision “to the Gentiles” or does it suggest the twelve did not command people to teach circumcision “to anyone”?
30. Why do the apostles send chosen men with Paul?
- 30a. Do the people in Galatia accept the teaching of the twelve?
- 30b. Do the people see the teaching of the twelve as authoritative over the false brethren? Why?
- 30c. Is the teaching of the false brethren strong enough to warrant sending direct representatives of the twelve?
- 30d. What does this suggest about questions 1 through 6?
31. Why does the letter list a few “burdens” that are “necessary”?
- 31a. Are these part of the twelve’s normal teaching?
- 31b. Does the text suggest the normal teaching by the twelve is even more burdensome?
32. What does verse 31 suggest about all the previous questions?
- 32a. Why do they “rejoice”? What is their mindset that encourages rejoicing at this news?
33. What does the final resolution imply about Paul’s relation to the twelve in terms of apostolic authority in Galatia?

[Reply](#)



**[christopher fisher](#)** says:

December 9, 2013 at 6:40 am

A few final thoughts on this entire exchange:

The original blog post set out a systematic argument about who the “false brethren” were in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. It attempted to use context clues to figure out their motivations, how they were viewed, and what authority they accepted.

Your entire argument did not respond to these points or offer a tangible alternative. Instead your goal was to distract from the text because the details of the text did not fit your theological premises. When watching a poorly written movie, the best way to expose plot holes is to ask questions. But you were not interested in answering questions about your own gaping plot holes. You were not even interested about asking me questions about what you considered my plot holes. This is excellent reaffirmation of my beliefs. If those who believe something else about this text are afraid of the text and are afraid to address my evidence, this is really good evidence that I am probably correct.

Furthermore, your knowledge of language (idioms, uses, word morphology) was highly flawed and alien to human nature. Your entire argument was based on various terms meaning very specific (and inflexible) concepts, in which all premises are implied. The implications, you believed, that only you knew. And when I tried to ascertain if you were even willing to consider alternatives, you ignored me.

You ignored my parallels, you ignored my questions that even assumed you were right in your premises (wow!), and you ignored all my questions about your gaping plot holes in your narrative. When I offered to even debate your understandings of these static concepts on blog posts that set a premise, you refused and then accused me of avoiding a debate on these issues (wow!).

Your rants against both scholars and laymen were wildly entertaining, but not at all conducive to your overall objective of offering an alternative to my narrative of events. You showed outright hostility by your second post, and flipped out when I tried to make you look at the text.

Will you advertise that your friends read this exchange? I don’t think you will. I don’t think you would like people

seeing your inability to deal with the actual text of Acts 15 and Galatians 2.

[Reply](#)



**carrierwave~ says:**

December 12, 2013 at 2:15 pm

“Your entire argument did not respond to these points or offer a tangible alternative. Instead your goal was to distract from the text because the details of the text did not fit your theological premises.”

I do not wish to be unkind or judgmental but you continue to misrepresent everything I said. According to you my “entire argument” did not offer “a tangible alternative” or respond to YOUR points and questions. “YOUR” questions, of course are “loaded” to only allow YOUR answers that only lead to “YOUR” spin on ONLY 2 chapters in the Bible! The “rules” of discussion YOU have layed down violate scriptural principles of interpretation, and commands from the Lord to “prove ALL things” and that “ALL SCRIPTURE” is to be used, because God gave it “FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Here you are representing yourself as an “intellectual in Bible instruction and doctrine” and you throw out all God’s commands on how to “rightly divide” His Word of TRUTH! You have accused me of “distracting from the texts” because the “texts did not fit my theological premises”. ANOTHER FULL-BLOWN misrepresentation! NEVER ONCE did I question or try to distract from the WHAT GOD SAID; I have NO PROBLEM with the TEXTS—THEY ARE GOD’S WORDS. It is YOUR approach, and conclusions that I do not accept or find even find plausible. I have simply USED OTHER WORDS OF GOD according to God’s command to use ALL scripture to study His Word and rightly divide it! You are the one with the problem. If your conclusions can’t stand the test God’s truth,(ALL scripture) then it is time to change your conclusions.

For instance:

“When watching a poorly written movie, the best way to expose plot holes is to ask questions. But you were not interested in answering questions about your own gaping plot holes.”

Here you are comparing your Bible study of Acts 15 and Gal 2 to ..“watching a poorly written movie.. to expose plot holes.” WRONG approach, Wrong motive, and wrong method! You will never find the “truth” using that platform and your question are unworthy of answers. Yet, I have attempted to answer many of them but I was met with opposition like: ‘STOP using other scriptures, those are a whole different subject’. OR, ‘that word does NOT MEAN what it says’.( mega, LOLOLOLOL!! ) Or, here is one you used above— “your goal is trying to distract from the text because the details of the text did not fit your theological premises”. Again—you accuse me of disagreeing with the TEXT. I have NO PROBLEM with the text; it is YOUR SPIN on the text with no supporting evidence, that fly’s in the face of the MAJORITY of other texts! I am not “afraid” of anything you said. The Word of God is my defense and I have diligently tried to prove that. However, Your “evidence” is flimsy at best because you have not supported it with the rest of God’s Word, just from your own limited reasoning.

Next— “Furthermore, your knowledge of language (idioms, uses, word morphology) was highly flawed and alien to human nature. Your entire argument was based on various terms meaning very specific (and inflexible) concepts, in which all premises are implied.”

Here you go again— I do not claim to be above average intelligence, However, I took English EVERY YEAR in college (it was required) for my degree and passed every year, by the way. And I took Greek two full courses also and passed above average each time. To say I am “flawed” in my understanding of English and Greek is going to take a lot more than just AN ACCUSATION. I gave specific Greek renderings that GOD CHOSE to use in those passages. Where does it say we are at liberty to twist and turn His Word at our own whim? God means WHAT HE SAYS. I only am reporting what God said with solid language agreement from both English and Greek in the SCRIPTURES. You have run off to “different languages” ideas, and latitudes outside language rules of interpretation. When the Word God said James and John “were brothers” God DID NOT mean they we “associates”. That is why liberals should never be involved in Bible translating; they like to tamper with the text to get their own spin across and not what God actually said. Jesus said man is not to live by “bread alone; but by every WORD (singular) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4) That leaves alternatives that change or destroy

the meaning “NOT ALLOWED”.

[Reply](#)



---

**[christopher fisher](#)** says:

December 12, 2013 at 9:52 pm

“Here you are comparing your Bible study of Acts 15 and Gal 2 to ..“watching a poorly written movie.. to expose plot holes.””

Wow... are you that dense? No. I am comparing reading YOUR narrative to a poorly written movie. You are writing fiction. Bad fiction that simple questions expose.

Here is what I am going to do. I am going to pdf this entire conversation, post it in the comments, and ban you until you answer my very direct questions about the text. I number my questions. I create readable paragraphs and number my points. I go out of my way to have you respond directly to me, but you refuse. You continually ignore the Bible to further your own agenda, it is sick.

[Reply](#)

---

**reality is not optional**

*The Twenty Ten Theme.    Blog at WordPress.com.*