

READING THE NEW TESTAMENT IN 2021 Week 5 (February 1-5)

("Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly" ... and bear fruit in our lives) – Colossians 3:16.

Historical Context (The letter is written from a gentile church to gentile and Jewish churches)

30 AD Some in the Sanhedrin begin to suppress teaching about Jesus (Acts 4:1-22; 5:26-41 6:7).

33 AD This leads to a persecution of Jews who believe in Jesus by other Jews: and the church – made up entirely of Jewish followers of Christ – is scattered (Acts 8:1-4, 9:1-2).

Some Jewish followers of Christ (Acts 2:5-11, 4:36-37), having fled to Antioch, may have told gentiles about Jesus (Acts 11:19- 21), as it was likely unsafe to talk about Jesus in the synagogues (local places of Jewish worship). The result was the first gentile-inclusive "synagogue". (A synagogue requires at least 10 males that are 13 years or older.)

43 AD Because they are not all Jewish, the members of the Antioch church are called "Christians."

45-48 AD Paul and Barnabas, part of the Antioch church, are sent by Spirit on an evangelistic tour (Acts 13:1-4) – the majority which is in the Roman province called "Galatia."

49 AD When Paul returns to the church in Antioch, he writes the letter to the Galatians.

Day Reading Clarification from the Greek (the original language)

Mon. Galatians 2 (:9) "**Peter**" = "Cephas." The Greek name "Peter" is only mentioned in 2:8. Why then, in 1:8, 2:11 and 2:14, is "Cephas" changed to "Peter" (cf. NIV)? There are three arguments ...

1. Jesus once said that Simon would be called "Cephas" ("rock" in Aramaic), "which is translated (in Greek) as 'Peter.'" (John 1:42).
2. The idea that Paul is actually poking fun at Peter: by pointing out that when it comes to living out the faith, he really isn't a "rock."
3. Listed with James and John, this Cephas is one original 12 apostles, and therefore must be Peter.

And yet ...

1. Is the James of 2:9, "James the brother of Jesus" in 1:19?
2. Peter already argued for the gentiles (Acts 11), and will make Paul's very argument in Acts 15:6-11.
3. Peter is never listed as being a leader in this predominately gentile church in Antioch (Acts 11:22-30, 13:1, 15:2, and 22-26).

Tues. 3 (:26) **Sons** = Not simply "children" (cf. NRSV). Daughters had less rights than sons. Even today, the Equal Rights Amendment has yet to be ratified. In contrast, God elevates everyone to both equal rights and inheritance.

Wed. 4 (:13) **Infirmity / illness** = "Without-strength-of-the-flesh". Paul had been attacked, stoned, dragged out of Lystra, and left for dead. The next day, he and Barnabas began the 60-mile journey to Derbe. There they made many disciples (Acts 14:19-21). Because of 4:15, and as a head injury can cause an inability to focus the eyes, Paul may be referring to Derbe.

Thur. 5 (:22) **Fruit** = A single fruit – like an orange with segments: the nine wonderful and complimentary parts develop together, as one well-rounded fruit.

Fri. 6 (:15) **New** = "Qualitatively better than what existed before."

Sources: Chabad.org; www.datingthenewtestament.com; www.thebiblejourney.org; [Chronological Study Bible](#); [Word Pictures of the New Testament](#); [IVP Bible Background Commentary: N.T.](#); and [Paul Apostle of the Heart Set Free](#).
[Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#); Vol. 1-3; [Analytical Greek Lexicon, Revised](#); Healthline.com; [The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament](#); [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek N.T.](#)

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