Scholars of Galatians have always expressed puzzlement at the present tense of the verb \( \zeta \alpha \omega \) in Paul's words to Cephas in Galatians 2:14. The phrase "If you are living [\( \zeta \varepsilon s \)] like a Gentile" is odd, for from Paul's perspective, the whole problem was that Cephas had ceased living like a Gentile by withdrawing from table fellowship after the men from James came. The present tense sounds more like what the men from James would have said to Cephas, when they first arrived and saw him eating with Gentiles.

In fact, scholars have long observed that several expressions in Galatians 2:14-17 sound more fitting for the men from James than for Paul himself, such as the contrast between "Jews by birth" and "sinners from the Gentiles" (2:15), and the argument in 2:17 that if seeking justification in Christ meant that even Jews should become like (Gentile) sinners, then Christ would be a "minister of sin" (2:17).

In this paper I want to propose that the reason so much of the language in Galatians 2:14-17 sounds so appropriate for the men from James is not because Paul is somehow "echoing" some of their vocabulary (as is usually suggested), but because he is quoting them. In 2:14, the verbs \( \varepsilon idon \) and \( \varepsilon i pon \) are normally read as first-person singular ("when I saw, I said"). But if these two verbs are read as third person plurals ("when they saw…they said"), the subject of the verbs would be the "men from James" (Gal 2:12). Thus Paul is not reporting what he said to Cephas when he resisted him (Gal 2:11), but what the men from James said when they came (2:12 \( \sigma \tau \varepsilon \delta \epsilon \eta \lambda \theta o \nu \)) and "they saw" (\( \sigma \tau \varepsilon \varepsilon i \delta o \nu \)) that Cephas and other Jewish believers were conducting themselves in a lax manner, and from their perspective, were "not walking upright in accordance with the truth of the gospel" (2:14).

§ If we read the verbs in 2:14 in this way, the quotation of what they said to Cephas continues from the middle of 2:14 through 2.17, at the end of which Paul rejects their arguments with a horrified \( \mu \eta \gamma \varepsilon \nu o i \tau o \), and introduces his own perspective by shifting to the first person singular (2.18-21).

Reading Gal 2.14-17 as the words of the men from James to Cephas allows us to make sense of several details that have traditionally presented interpretive difficulties:

1. the present tense of \( \zeta \nu \zeta \) (v. 14) is obvious;
2. vs. the contrast between "Ioudaioi by birth" and "gentile sinners" is rhetorically intuitive if the men from James are urging Cephas to quit living like a Gentile sinner.

3. in 2:16 the most natural meaning of ἐὰν µή, that is an "exceptional" meaning, is no longer a problem to be solved so as to fit this into Paul's thought, but instead coheres nicely with the outlook of the people expressing it;

4. in 2:17 we no longer have to choose between a half-dozen ways of construing the argument (does Paul deny the second premise? or grant it and deny the conclusion? Does he mean actually sinners or sinners from the bogus perspective of people who think gentiles are sinners?)—instead, the argument becomes entirely straightforward and indeed rather compelling; furthermore, the word "sinner" maintains the same sense throughout the whole passage;

5. Finally, the shift in person between 2:15-17 and 2:18 is not accidental or merely stylistic, but rather coincides with Paul giving his point of view, rejecting the faulty outlook of the men from James.

Naturally, even as this proposed reading removes certain interpretive difficulties it creates new ones—expressions that always worked just fine are now problematic; these will be acknowledged and addressed in due course.

First let me walk us through the passage as I am proposing to read it, offering a sort of expanded paraphrase along the way, and drawing attention to some of the expressions that would or would not carry a different nuance on my reading. [This passage is a thicket of controversial terms: justification, works of the law, pistis Christou, Ioudaioi—. As far as possible I want to keep open the range of meanings that have been proposed for these terms, not only because there is simply not time to argue for particular interpretations but also because I don't think my proposed reading hinges on a particular take on these debates (although you might conclude my reading favors one or another).]
2:11: Paul states that he "resisted" Cephas (2.11), and since he says that, it has been natural to expect him to report what he said to Cephas. But we might equally well expect him to describe what the men from James said to Cephas, since their words, far more than Paul's, seem to have been decisive.

In 2:12 and 13, on the standard reading and on my reading, Paul gives a bit of background, explaining how it came to pass that Cephas and the other Jews had come to "play the hypocrite" (2.12-13).

On the interpretation I am proposing, Paul simply says more about how this all transpired. He not only states that Cephas withdrew when the men from James came; he also includes the argument that the men from James used.¹

It is not hard to imagine why Paul would communicate what the men from James said. It is the same reason he must discuss the Antioch incident in the first place: Paul's opponents in Galatia could presumably point to Antioch to show that everyone respected the authority of James and the Jerusalem (Gal 4.26). We can imagine Paul's opponents in Galatia saying, "Yes, there was a brief and ill-thought out experiment with mixed table fellowship at Antioch; but James sent a delegation to rectify matters and everyone fell into line except for Paul.

Paul feels he must address what the men from James said if he is to dissuade the congregations of Galatia from following a similar line of argument. Naturally, Paul, even as he quotes them, he presents their words in such a way as to try to highlight what he deems unattractive or inconsistent in their position. Paul wants to relate this event in a way that highlights that Cephas and Barnabas acted inconsistently with their true beliefs—that the arguments to which they succumbed were faulty.

¹ It is possible that in the phrase κατεγνωσµένος ἦν (2.11) we should see a genuine passive (so Victorinus, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia). In this case, Paul would state: "I resisted Cephas [because of his hypocritical conduct, which resulted] because he had been condemned"—that is, condemned by the men from James. V. 12 (γαρ) would then explain who it was who "condemned" him.
When these men from James saw that Cephas and the other Jewish believers were not, in their view, walking upright according to the truth of the gospel, they said to Cephas, in the presence of everyone:

14b "If you, being a Jew, are living like a Gentile and not a Jew, how will you convince the Gentiles to Judaize—that is, to adopt the ways of the people of God? Cephas, what are you doing? [15] We are by nature Jews and not Gentile sinners!

16. Granted, we all agree that a person is not justified from the works of the law except for by the faith of Jesus Christ; and so even we Jews have put our faith in Christ Jesus, and so were justified from pistis Christou and not from works of the law, for from works of the law shall no flesh be justified. We grant all of this.

17. But if seeking to be justified in Christ has as its corollary that even we Jews should start living like [Gentile] sinners, as your conduct here would imply, then that would mean that Christ—so far from bringing greater righteousness to humankind—is in fact aiding and abetting sin! Your response implies that Christ has come to make Jews more like Gentile sinners, rather than to bring Gentile into the righteous fold of the people of God!"

In the eyes of these men from James, the advent of the messiah meant that the time had arrived for more perfect observance of Torah by Jewish believers, and for some of the blessings of Torah to flow to the nations. For Cephas and other Jewish believers at Antioch to relax their observance of the Law in the name of Christ was to make Christ a "servant of sin." In short, if the result of faith in Jesus as Messiah was that Jews should live more like Gentiles, Jesus would be responsible for an increase in aggregate human sin, for nudging formerly decent Jews in the direction of sinful gentiles.

2:14
On my proposed reading, what the men from James perceived—what they "saw"—was "they (the Ioudaioi) were not walking upright according to the truth of the gospel." Paul is not quoting yet—this is indirect discourse, where Paul describes their perception. Would he ascribe to them such a thought when the phrase ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is obviously dear to Paul's own heart (2:5; cf. 5:7)? Perhaps, for equally dear to him is the term "gospel" itself, and as much as it pains Paul to acknowledge it, it seems pretty clear that Jewish Christians prior to him—and sometimes opposed to him—called their message "gospel."²

The expression ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς is uncharacteristic for Paul.³ Paul's more familiar expression for "conduct in accordance with" is περιπατέω + κατά (Rom 8.4; 14.15; 1 Cor 3.3; 2 Cor 10.2; cf. Eph 2.2).⁴ The departure from typical Pauline language is accounted for if he is presenting a locution of the men from James (and here I would speak of "echoing"). And I would submit that the whole phrase is redolent of language often used for upright conduct in accordance with God's Law, "Walking straight" or "upright" (ירח and ישר) is biblical, and since God's law is truth and his commands are straight, one is to walk upright/straight in God's truth. In short, parts of this phrase are atypical for Paul, but the whole expression "walking straight according to the truth of the gospel" would be entirely at home on the lips of heralds of a nomistic gospel. I include the example from 4 Maccabees partly for the linguistic link—living in accordance with truth is parallel to "living according with law"—but also because I think this quotation captures the sentiment of the men from James when they "witnessed" the irrational behavior of the Ioudaioi in Antioch: "you have always

² It is helpful here is to consider the case of the word "gospel," another word so dear to Paul that he can barely bear to acknowledge that others (apparently) used it with a content different from his own. So Paul expresses his astonishment that "you turn to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel," Furthermore, Paul speaks elsewhere of other "gospels" (2 Cor 11.4; cf. Gal 2.7, where Paul has "the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter has "[the gospel] "of the uncircumcised") Martyn, Galatians, 121; idem, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," SJT 38 (1985) 314.


⁴ Burton, Galatians, 111. Alternatively Paul uses περιπατέω with ἐν (Rom 6.4; 13.13; 2 Cor 4.2; 10.3), with διά (2 Cor 5.7), or with the dative (2 Cor 12.18; Gal 5.16). In Galatians Paul uses στοιχέω + dative in this sense (6.16).
lived in accordance with truth, why are you altering your course now. Why are you not walking upright?"

If we look more closely at the details, you will see that the most immediate advantage to reading v. 14 as the speech of the men from James is that is the present tense of ζης. When taken as Paul's speech, it's always been hard to give a compelling explanation. It has been proposed that it might represent the fact that Cephas was still living as a Gentile in some other ways besides his table fellowship. But Paul could have stated that easily enough—and to the benefit of his argument that Cephas was a hypocrite. The sentence as we have it expresses astonishment that Cephas is living like a gentile, and this sentiment makes sense on the lips of the men from James.

πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἁναγκάζεις ἱουδαίζειν;

To consider these as the word of James' delegation, we might ask separately about the substance and about the choice of terms. So far as the substance goes, this sounds like the widespread expectation that the Messianic Age would see Gentiles included among those who accepted the yoke of the Torah. Whether it's prophetic texts, like Isaiah saying that the Servant of the Lord would bring his "law as a light to the nations" (Isa 51.4) or contemporaries like Philo stating that the Jewish laws which were already "desirable and precious in the eyes of all"—and would one day be adopted universally (Vit. Mos. 2.43-44), or various rabbinic comments to the effect that the days of the messiah would see gentiles attempting to become proselytes, the thought isn't mysterious: They say to Cephas, "How can we be a light to the nations if we start living like them? How will we convince them to adopt our ways if we adopt theirs?"

So much for the substance of their question. What about the expression "compel them to Judaize"? Would they have used the word "compel"?
1. It's not out of the question. Scot McKnight, Francis Watson, Marcus Bockmuehl argue that "any politically defensible integration of Gentiles, especially within the biblical Land, might only be possible by 'requiring them to live as Jews (cf. Gal 2.14: τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ιουδαίζειν)—a point of view to which James appeals, and to which Peter gives way."\(^5\) [Note that Bockmuehl treats Gal 2.14 as though it expresses James's point of view, and in fact as the argument to which Peter "gave way"—as though it were what James's men said to Peter.]

Cassius Dio uses precisely this term in an analogous context: Maecenas, advising Augustus to adopt a traditional approach to the gods, suggests that Augustus should himself worship according to the traditions of the fathers and should compel others to do the same. (Cassius Dio 52.36). Hippolytus paraphrases Darius's decree in Dan 6 this way: "Darius compelled the whole world worship the God of the Jews."

2. Judaeans had, of course, "compelled" gentiles to follow Judaean laws in the past. The Hasmoneans would allow the conquered Idumaeans and Ituraeans to remain on their land only if they would be circumcised and observe the ancestral customs of the Jews.\(^6\) The Greek historian Ptolemy and Josephus both describe this policy with the verb ἀναγκάζω: they "compelled them."\(^7\)

So possibly the men from James used this term—they wanted Cephas to compel them.


\(^7\) "The Idumaeans … having been subjugated by the Jews and having been forced to undergo circumcision [ἀναγκασθέντες περιτέμνεσθαι], to contribute (taxes) to the nation, and to follow the same laws, they were called Judaeans" (M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1974–1984] 1.356 (§146).

\(^8\) "he compelled the inhabitants … to be circumcised and to live in accordance with the laws of the Jews" (ἀναγκάσας τε τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας … περιτέμνεσθαι καὶ κατὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαϊῶν νόμους ζῆν, *A.J.* 13.318). Cf. also *A.J.* 13.397: Jannaeus destroyed Pella "because the inhabitants did not promise to change over to the ancestral customs of the Jews." On these episodes, see Cohen, *Beginnings*, 110-19.
But Josephus can also treats compulsion to Judaize as a bad thing, as in the story in his *Life* about two gentiles from Trachonitis whom the Jews wanted to *compel* to be circumcised (*Vita*, 113). In this case, Josephus insists that he rescued the gentiles because he believed that "in matters of piety, there must be free choice."

This is suggestive—and, in fact, Aryeh Kasher and others have argued that the even reports of the Hasmoneans "compelling" circumcision originated as anti-Judaean propaganda. Without getting into *that* question, it's clear that Josephus *can* portray "compelling" someone to Judaize in a bad light, AND PAUL CLEARLY DOES SO.

2:3: Titus was NOT compelled to be circumcised;  
6:12 οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι).

So it's possible that the men from James used the term "compel," but it's also possible that they put matters more positively, "How will you *persuade* the gentiles the adopt our way of life?" My hunch is that it is Paul who when quoting them relishes putting their words this way in the hope that his readers will come to see conversion as a sort of capitulation to an alien will.

**2:14a:** Interpreting ἀλλά in Gal 2.14

But just as a couple of interpretive difficulties are resolved by this re-reading, new ones are also created. Let me address the two that strike me:

The first is the ἀλλά. If in 2:14 Paul is introducing the argument that led the Jewish believers at Antioch to change their behavior, we might have expected a word like γάρ rather than an ἀλλά: "When the men from James came, Cephas withdrew and the other Jews were drawn into his hypocrisy. *For*, when the men from James saw that they were not..., they said to Cephas...." On the standard

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9 Josephus tells of one Roman commander Metilius who tried to save his life by offering to "Judaize as far as circumcision" (*B.J.* 2.454). That gentiles might undergo circumcision (or be faced with it) when under Jewish power appears not only in these episodes from the Hasmonean dynasty and the Jewish war. Esther 8.17 (LXX) says that the gentiles underwent circumcision and adopted Jewish ways from fear of the Jews (πολλοὶ τῶν ἑθνῶν περιετέμνων καὶ ιουδάιζον διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ιουδαίων).
interpretation of this verse, the ἀλλά contrasts the hypocritical response of the other Jews with Paul's response: they were all drawn into Cephas's hypocrisy, "but" when I saw this, I spoke out boldly.

However a quick look at Pauline usage shows that he quite often has ἀλλά where it clearly means something like "Now," "indeed."

I've given a list of such passages where the English versions either leave the ἀλλά untranslated or render it "therefore," "now," "indeed." As you will see in 2 Cor 3:15, Paul even uses ἀλλά in perfect parallel with γάρ. NRSV renders them both "indeed."¹⁰

These and other passages demonstrate that we would not be playing fast and loose with the meaning of the term if, in the present passage, Paul is using ἀλλά to jump back to verse 12. In v. 13 Paul had recounted the consequences of Cephas's change of behavior, and with ἀλλά he returns to the events that led Cephas astray in the first place: "Now, the reason he and everyone else acted hypocritically is this...." "But as I was saying...."

**Galatians 2:15** Ἡμεῖς φύσιν Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνων ἁμαρτωλοί

"We are by nature Ioudaioi and not sinners from the gentiles."

Scholars have often commented that "this sentence sounds exceedingly odd in Paul's mouth" and must be borrowing the language of the men from James. To make the dividing line of sinners and non-sinners coterminous with the line between Ioudaioi by birth and gentiles seems to stand in profound contradiction with Paul's insistence that Ioudaioi and Greeks alike were under sin. It is true, of course, that in Romans Paul wants to insist that the Jew has an advantage, but whatever that advantage is, it is emphatically not in their being free from sin. To claim in this context that Jews were unlike gentiles sinners seems not only

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¹⁰ Perhaps even closer in analogy to the present case, in 2 Cor 8 Paul describes the Macedonians' generosity to his collection (8.1-6) and then calls on the Corinthians to contribute as well, introducing the plea to them with ἀλλά. If there is any adversative sense at all, it cannot come from a contrast with the content of the preceding material ("the Macedonians gave generously, but please give also") but from something more general—quite possibly from the fact that Paul is returning to the topic of the Corinthians (not the Macedonians): "but as I was saying..." "but as for you...".

9
inconsistent with Paul's thought, but inappropriate to his purposes in Galatians. Paul is writing to Gentile congregations who have already come to feel that they have not done enough to become the descendants of Abraham (Gal 3:29). Why would he remind them here of their innate disadvantage?

Commentators often suggest that "gentile sinners" is ironic, and translations show this understanding by putting it in quotation marks, but of course this grammatical device was not available to Paul! Dunn in fact argues that it was Paul's opponents' use of this word "sinners" for gentiles that “probably brought home to him the incompatibility of such language with the gospel” (Dunn, “Incident,” 158; cf. 156). Here we're to imagine Paul almost shuddering—for his readers' benefit—as he repeats this insulting remark: "So I said, 'Cephas, we're not 'sinners from the gentiles'--oh to think of calling my brethren in Christ such a term."

But if Paul does not somehow convey to his readers that this is the Jamesian expression and not his, it wouldn't function "ironically"; it wouldn't be clear to the readers that Paul found the expression problematic.

On the other hand, the expression makes excellent sense on the lips of the men from James, who were understandably appalled that Cephas and the other Ioudaioi were becoming more gentile at the very point in God's time that their righteousness should exceed even other Ioudaioi. (If with Bockmuehl we imagine the men from James view Antioch as belonging to Eretz Israel, their choice of the term Ioudaioi, with its clearer geographical connotations, would make sense.)

On the reading I'm proposing, the words are not only fitting for their speakers, but we can see from Paul's perspective, how delicious it would be to quote them in this way. That is, to say to his readers, "Do you hear what they said

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11 F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 137; Dunn, "Echoes," 464; Martyn, *Galatians*. Dunn summarizes what the men from James must have said to Peter: "How can you, Peter, being a trueborn Jew, eat with Gentile sinners?" Here and elsewhere Dunn assumes that Paul is using the words of the men from James, and even argues that their use of this word for gentiles is what “probably brought home to [Paul] the incompatibility of such language with the gospel agreed earlier in Jerusalem…” (Dunn, “Incident,” 158; cf. 156).
to Cephas—how they view you? It's not just that they think you're sinners, but that they are Ioudaioi by birth. Even if you convert and undergo circumcision, you still won't be a Ioudaios by birth."

It is worth noting that on the normal reading, this is the only passage where Paul calls himself a Ioudaios.\(^\text{12}\) Paul's own preferred nomenclature is "Hebrew" or "Israelite" of the "tribe of Benjamin"\(^\text{13}\); as close as he comes to calling himself a Ioudaios is his claim "I became ὡς Ἰουδαῖος" (1 Cor 9.20)—an expression that makes it clear that Paul did not regard this term as an adequate description of his own ethnic identity.

And I would add that would be odd to find Paul calling himself a Ioudaios here in Galatians: when he has spoken of his own activity in Ἰουδαῖος as something he used to engage in (Gal 1:13-14), and he will shortly declare that in Christ οὐκ ἐν Ἰουδαίος οὐδὲ Ἑλλην (Gal 3:28). And more importantly, in the Sarah and Hagar allegory, he aligns himself with his addressees: "we are children of spirit & promise," and scripture says to cast out those begotten *kata sarka*. That "begotten kata sarka" comes very close to "Ioudaioi by birth" here, and it's clear in Galatians that Paul wants to distance himself from such an identity.

2.16:

a. εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

b. καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰστεύσαμεν,

c. ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,

d. ὅτι εἰς ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πάσα σάρξ

\(^{12}\) Cf. Acts 21:39 and 22:3, where in rapid succession Paul tells the tribune ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος μέν εἰμι Ἰουδαῖος and then the Jerusalem crowd ἐγὼ εἰμι ἄνη Ἰουδαῖος (the latter is difficult for the thesis of Kuhn (and many since) that Ἰουδαῖος is the term used by gentiles or when speaking to gentiles).

\(^{13}\) Rom 11.1: καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἰμί, ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραὰμ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν; 2 Cor 11.22: Ἐβραῖοι εἰσιν; καὶ Ἰσραηλίται εἰσιν; καὶ Ἐφραῖμ ἐστιν; καὶ Ἑβραῖο τὰ Ἑβραίων εἰσιν; καὶ Ἑβραῖοι οἱ Ἑβραίοι, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἐβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος. Even when speaking of "my kindred according to the flesh" Paul uses "Israelites" (Rom 9:3-4: τῶν ἄδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα, ὡς εἰσίν Ἰσραηλίται).
For all the Jamesian-sounding language scholars have noted in vv. 14, 15, and 17, v. 16 feels like the beating heart of Paul's "Justification by faith." Could this verse also be construed as the speech of the men from James?

The first step toward an affirmative answer to this question is to recall that even on the standard reading (in which Paul is speaking), a rather wide range of interpreters—from Calvin onward—think that the content of V. 16 must be common ground for Paul and Jewish Christians. In Betz's words, it is actually Jewish-Christian self-definition: it "must be old, and it is easy to interpret it in pre-Pauline, Jewish Christian terms" (emphasis added). de Boer puts it: "The building blocks of [Paul's] theology of justification in this letter (and subsequently in Romans) -- 'works of the law' 'justification by pístis Christou, -- have been given him by those opposing his work in Galatia." If 2:16 is common ground between Paul, Cephas, and other Jewish Christians, then it can also be the expression of those Jewish Christians.

I would say that this "common ground," this "Jewish Christian self-definition," makes as much sense on their lips as on Paul's. Naturally, for them, "the denial [of justification by works of the Torah] does not imply that 'the works of the Torah' do not need to be done. Denied is only that they [suffice to] produce justification before God." This much we already expected or else there wouldn't be a mission to the circumcision.

In short, the delegation from James says to Cephas, "we agree that being a Ioudaios and observing the works of the Law is inadequate for justification unless [ἐὰν μὴ] there is faith in Christ."

By reading this as the speech of the men from James we can give the words ἐὰν μὴ their most natural meaning, "unless" or "except,"¹⁴ rather than trying to construe them as adversative ("but," "but only") so as to harmonize this sentence with Paul's thought.

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¹⁴ BGAD s.v. ἐὰν μή: "if not, unless." Dunn, Jesus, 212; Burton, Galatians, 121: "ἐὰν μὴ is properly exceptive, not adversative..."; "Throughout the rest of the NT, ἐὰν μὴ is normally translated as exceptive" (Das, "Another Look," 531); "That Paul never uses the adversative ἐὰν μη elsewhere indicates that he is not likely doing so in Gal 2:16a."
It has been a puzzle how to make sense of the fact that, on the one hand, this expression almost always means "except"—and always does so in Paul—and on the other hand, the fact Paul clearly sees an antithesis between justification by works of the law and faith in Christ: Rom 3:28: justified by faith apart from works of the law (δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἁνθρωπον χωρίς ἔργων νόμου).

Those who acknowledge that εαν μη means "except" (and not "but") but want to harmonize this statement with Paul's antithetical formulations elsewhere have argued that there is here an ellipsis within a parenthesis, such that Paul means to say something like: "knowing that a person is not justified by works of law ([a person is not justified] except through faith in Christ)."

Dunn's proposal was that we are observing here the transition from Paul's own former understanding of justification (the exceptive formulation) to his later antithetical understanding. But as many have noted, it is not easy to see why Paul should have taken the trouble to communicate his successive formulations, including the cancelled one, without making it clear that he had abandoned them.

But if these are the words of the men from James, the most natural sense of εαν μη can be maintained: the works of the law are inadequate apart from Christ; for those who are by nature Jews, the works of the law are still to be done—that was too obvious to be included in a credo—but they are not sufficient.

But even if there everything in V. 16 is consonant with a Jamesian theology, it does seem unnecessary for the men from James to belabor this point. After all, the men from James were not trying to convince Cephas that the works of the law were insufficient (that was the point of agreement), but rather they were trying to remind him that works of the law were still necessary. In short, the

15 Debbie Hunn, "ἔαν μη in Galatians 2:16: A Look at Greek Literature," Novum Testamentum 49 (2007): 281-90. Although Hunn shows that ἔαν μη does not absolutely have to have an exceptive meaning, it always has this meaning in Paul. D. R. Goodwin, "Ἑαν μη, Gal. ii.16" JBL 6 (1886) 122-27 noted Mark 10:30 as a possible instance of ἔαν μη denoting antithesis, and BDF §376 suggests Mark 4:22 as well as Gal 2:16a might be (rare) instances where of antithesis. But in neither Mark 4:22 or 10:30 is it clear that "except" is not equally appropriate (Das, "Another Look," 531n6). See also the comments of Campbell, Deliverance of God, 1148n32.
repetition of this "not … but"—the sheer length of vs. 16—seems unnecessary for their purposes.

Here I think the references to "hypocrisy" (v. 13) are important. Paul is trying to depict the behavior of Cephas and the other Jews as fundamentally disingenuous: they believe one thing yet do another. Hence when "quoting" the common formulation of justification by faith, I think Paul teases it out in terms amenable to his own quite different point of view, so that their conduct would seem to be inconsistent with their beliefs.

Gal 2.17: εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὑρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ, ἃρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος.

Many scholars have noted that much in this argument sounds like it originated with the more conservative participants of the Antioch incident. But on the lips of the men from James, the otherwise wide array of possible interpretations is greatly reduced. In what may well have constituted their most compelling argument, the men from James point out that if the implication or corollary of seeking to be justified by Christ is that even we Jews should live like (Gentile) sinners, "then Christ is a servant of sin." This scenario allows us to give the word "sinners" the force that it had in v. 15 (namely, an association with gentile conduct), and it accounts for the καὶ αὐτοὶ, "even we ourselves;" and we can see in what sense Christ is being called a minister of sin: if the Jewish Christians became like sinners in the name of Christ, Christ had in effect promoted sin.17

I would read an acute accent on ἃρα, seeing the illative particle marking inference, "then," "consequently."

At this point Paul rejects the whole argument with μὴ γένοιτο. Although Paul typically uses μὴ γένοιτο to reject a question that stems from fallacious reasoning, his own usage varies; and in contemporary Greek, μὴ γένοιτο is used

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16 Cf. Esler, Galatians, 139.

17
as an interjection by new speakers in response to a horrible proposal. (C. F. D. Moule saw here a new speaker.)

**Galatians 2:18 εἰ γὰρ ἂν κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἐμαυτὸν συνιστάνω**

In Galatians 2.18-21, Paul gives his own response to these arguments.

Time won't permit close examination of these verses, but let me make two quick observations.

First, if Paul has been speaking and the "we" in Gal 2.15-17 meant Paul and Cephas, then it is not at all clear what has changed between v. 17 and v. 18 to account for the shift to the first person singular. On my reading, there's a reason for the shift.

Second, I think the change in vocabulary from "sinner" to "transgressor" suits Paul's perspective, and shows how thoroughly he must reject the way the men from James had framed what was happening in Antioch. The vocabulary of "sinner" especially when it is was used to mark the Jew/Gentile divide (2:15, 17), is unwieldy for Paul. From Paul's perspective, there was no "sin" in Antioch in the first place—nothing genuinely contrary to God's good will. The most there might be is transgression—violation of commandments, and is more amenable to Paul's position, because without law, there is no transgression (Rom 4:15; Gal 3:19; Rom 5:13-14), and, since he no longer lives in the realm of law (2:19), "transgression" is not a possibility.

In conclusion,

On the one hand, many—perhaps most—exegetes have thought that Gal 2:14-17 includes some traces or vestiges of the language that was used by the men from James. Furthermore, it is widely (though not universally) agreed that the contents of 2:16— which do sound quintessentially Pauline—expressed common ground shared by Paul and other Jewish Christians.

Hence, in some sense although I know this reading might seem rash, I think the real novum of my proposal is that it can better explain how it is that locutions of the men
from James found their way into this passage, and it can make sense of how and why Paul quoted them in the way he did.