



“The Perversion of the Gospel”

Galatians 1:6-9

Theme: The Gospel is inviolable.

I. THE ASTONISHMENT AT THE POWER OF FALSE TEACHING – 1:6

A. The Defection of the Gospel

1. Paul immediately jumps into the matter at hand – and does so with a rapid expression of astonishment – *“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ ...”*
2. *“amazed”* [θαυμάζω] – to be extraordinarily disturbed by something – implying that Paul is left agape by the Galatian believers’ *“deserting”* the Lord *“so quickly.”*
3. The idea here of *“deserting”* [μετατίθημι] – indicates that they were defecting or *having a change of mind in allegiance, change one’s mind, turn away, desert.*¹²
4. In the Apocrypha, this term is used to describe the apostasy from the Jewish way of life – and there is irony in Paul’s choice of the word.
5. It is also used of military desertion, a grievous offense punishable by death – indicating the Paul sees this as a huge issue and not some fine point of doctrinal disagreement.
6. The point of Paul’s concern is that this is not merely a system of belief they were abandoning, but a Person – they were *“deserting Him who called you ...”* – a reference to God who called [the Effectual Call] them by grace to be saved.

B. The Distinctiveness of the Gospel

1. He identifies what was luring them away was a message that was completely *“different.”*
2. Although the false teachers were likely affirming everything Paul taught, except they asserted that Paul was perverting the Gospel by not insisting on circumcision and the observance of certain Old Testament regulations.

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 642.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 642.



3. However, Paul states that to add anything to the Gospel will change the message from being one of grace to something entirely different.
4. Essentially the False teachers wanted to add Gospel truth on top of the legalistic standards of Judaism while Paul was teaching that the Gospel of grace should replace whatever system of legalism people were under.
5. The most dangerous form of error is truth mixed with error – it is easy to spot rank heresy.
6. “But anything added to grace destroys it just as surely as does anything taken from it. When law – even God’s own law – is added to His grace, His grace ceases to be grace.”³ – Romans 11:6.

II. THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PERVERSION OF FALSE TEACHING – 1:7

A. It Is Different – “... which is really not another”

1. In verse six, Paul states that it was a “*different gospel*” – he uses a term for different that emphasizes distinction - ἕτερος.
2. Now, he says that the alteration makes it so different that it is not the same at all – by saying “... *which is really not another*” of the same kind [ἄλλος].
3. Since there is only one Gospel that saves, a “*different Gospel*” cannot save and will lead to condemnation since it adds human achievement.

B. It Is Disturbing – “... only there are some who are disturbing you ...”

1. The way the false teachers had successfully wooed the Galatians away from the Lord was by “disturbing” them.
2. “*disturbing*” [ταράσσω] – refers to throwing them into confusion; to shake up their minds or to destabilize their conviction.
3. They intentionally were causing the Galatian believers to doubt the sufficiency of Christ and grace.

C. It Is Distorted – “... and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”

1. Their intention was to “*distort the gospel of Christ*.”
2. “*distort*” [μεταστρέφω] – to cause a change in state or condition – and describes a complete transformation such as from light to dark; feasting to mourning; or fresh to salt water – turning something into its opposite.
3. They despised grace and the “liberty” that grace produced and deliberately sought to recapture the standards of legalism under Jewish law.
4. This is particularly dangerous as the sinful heart of man desires to be included in self-deliverance; there must be something I can do to contribute – hence every religion in the world is based on a system of

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 13–14.

works righteousness.

III. THE ANATHEMA OF THE PURVEYORS OF FALSE TEACHING - 1:8-9

A. The Changelessness of the Message of Grace - v. 8

1. Paul emphatically denies that any changes to the Gospel is possible - *“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!”*
2. The Gospel message is “once for all delivered to the saints” - cp. Jude 3.
3. The reverence must be for the message and not the messenger - regardless of who they are - the Word of God stands.

B. The Condemnation of Messengers of Works - v. 9

1. Paul states that regardless of who it is - a person who changes the message of the Gospel must be condemned.
2. He declares: *“As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed.”*
3. *“accursed”* [ἀνάθεμα] - refers to a settled state of reprobation and condemnation - eternal damnation.

The Gospel is inviolable.