

## Counterfeit Gospel

### I. Deserting God (1:6)

- A. The Galatian Christians were in the process of deserting (military term) the truth.
  - 1. They were choosing to follow error, and were responsible for their choice.
  - 2. Embracing error means rejecting God and His grace.
- B. Deserting gospel theology = deserting God, the One who called them.
  - 1. Deserting the gospel is personal to God. He takes it as a desertion from Himself, not just a desertion from a theological position.
  - 2. In the same way embracing the gospel is to embrace the Lord personally. It's not just academic assent to theological propositions.

### II. Distorting the gospel (1:6b-7)

- A. Understand the terms
  - 1. "different" is heteros in vs 6, and means "another a different kind" as in *an entirely different kind*
  - 2. "another" is allos in vs 7, and means "another of the same kind" as in *the same kind as this, but not this exact one*
  - 3. "contrary" is par in verses 8 and 9, and means "contrary to" as in *totally other than* what it is compared to
  - 4. "distort" in vs 7 means to cause a change of state with emphasis on the difference in the resulting state, *so to change to, to turn into, to cause to be different from* what it was, used in two other places in the NT Acts 2:20 James 4:9
- B. Understand the problem
  - 1. A different gospel was an attempt to pervert the gospel.
  - 2. There are not a variety of gospels from which to choose.
  - 3. This different gospel does not deserve to be called a gospel at all.
- C. Understand the source
  - 1. The gospel Paul preaches is not the gospel of Paul, nor the gospel of the Jerusalem apostles. Paul says that human or angelic source does not matter.
  - 2. The gospel Paul proclaimed was not the true gospel because it was Paul who proclaimed it. It is the true gospel because the risen Christ gave it to Paul to proclaim.
    - a. Paul did not adapt it to please his audience. His was accused of adjusting this gospel to fit the Gentiles. Paul denies this charge.
    - b. Later in Gal 6:12-13 Paul shows that it is actually the false teachers who are trying to please people, for they are distorting the gospel so that they will not be persecuted by the Jewish people.

### III. Deciding What is True

- A. In the NT gospel we have God calling us, and us responding to that call with genuine repentance (change of mind) and authentic faith (in Jesus for forgiveness of sin).
  - 1. We simply respond to His call (Holy Spirit's conviction, John 16:8) by following Him (repent and believe, Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9).
  - 2. A lifetime of sanctification then follows, a lifetime of learning what pleases the Lord and living His way. In the NT gospel, you get accepted by Christ, and then His Spirit sanctifies, shapes and grows you in holiness through the years.
- B. Other religions (even "Christian" distortions) have it the other way around.

- 1. First you follow some set of rules, or get some required rituals or ceremonies.
  - 2. Then when you have merited, or shown yourself worthy, then you get accepted.
- C. Modern day errors:
- 1. You need to muster up enough faith, enough commitment to Jesus to be saved.
  - 2. What you believe is not the really important thing, as long as you are a good and loving person.
  - 3. What you believe is not the really important thing, as long as you're sincere, that's what counts.
  - 4. You need to live by a certain set of rules in order to be saved, or to keep certain religious rituals in order to be saved, or to perform certain religious ceremonies in order to be saved.
- D. How can we know that the gospel we proclaim is the true gospel?
- 1. Paul says the standard is what he and the Apostles received from Christ and then proclaimed, which is recorded in the Bible.
  - 2. The standard is not any person, not Paul himself, not even an angel from heaven.
  - 3. The gospel Paul and the Apostles proclaimed they got from Jesus, proclaimed everywhere they went, to everyone they encountered, and recorded in the Bible.
  - 4. Paul says to evaluate and judge him and his teaching with the gospel He got from Jesus as the standard.  
POINT: The Bible is the authority, not any person, not any group of people, not any feeling, not any experience.

### IV. Deserving of Condemnation

- A. Paul pronounces judgment upon any who would pervert the gospel of grace, and reiterates that there is only one gospel that makes salvation possible.
- B. Why does it matter so much?
  - 1. Embracing a different gospel means you are deserting the One who called you. (vs 6) To abandon gospel theology is to abandon Christ personally.
  - 2. A different gospel is not the gospel. (vs. 6b-7) The gospel message is that you are saved by grace through faith in Christ's work and nothing else at all.
  - 3. A different gospel brings condemnation, not salvation. (vs 8-9) Eternal life and death are at stake here.
  - 4. A different gospel may be more accepted by people and may make you more pleasing to people, but a different gospel is rejected by God as are those who embrace it. (vs. 10)

### Message

*The gospel expresses the Lord's very personal concern for you.*

### Some things to think about and act upon:

- 1. How important is the gospel to you? How does this show in your life? Have you believed it? Do you explain the gospel to others?
- 2. Why does understanding the true gospel produce anger at false gospels?
- 3. How does society's relative view of truth make it difficult to explain the concept of one true gospel?
- 4. Which false gospel are people you know more likely to embrace?
  - the "You've got to have enough faith" false gospel
  - the "You've got to be a good and loving person" false gospel
  - the "As long as you're sincere" false gospel, or
  - the "As long as you get these religious rituals, rites, ceremonies" false gospel?