

Challenged with the Truth

Galatians 1:6-12

I think you will agree that Paul offered a very encouraging and gracious greeting to the Galatians. However, having greeted them, he got right to the point regarding his concern for them. Paul was well aware of the presence of false teachers among them and the real dangers their teaching posed to the churches and those within their communities. This wasn't an issue that Paul could ignore – the souls of people within Galatia hung in the balance. Paul wasted no time combating the false doctrine being spread among them.

As we survey the world around us and the many doctrines and philosophies being spread, there is cause for alarm in our day as well. We live in a fallen world, cursed by sin, where countless souls live apart from a genuine relationship with Christ. Their only hope is to hear the truth of the gospel. The world doesn't need a "watered down" gospel that refuses to confront sin and heresy – it needs to hear of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and their need to respond to the gospel in repentance and faith. Just as it was in Paul's day, the need is urgent in our day. We too must be willing to stand for truth and oppose the false teaching so prevalent in our day.

As we examine the [challenges](#) Paul presents in the text, I want to consider the thought: [Challenged with the Truth](#).

I. A Serious Admonition (6-7) – Paul wasted no time confronting the false doctrine being spread in Galatia and the willingness of the people to embrace such heresy. Notice:

A. Paul's Concern (6) – [I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel](#). Paul is not concerned with sparing their feelings with this admonition. He understood the danger posed by the false doctrine being shared. He was astonished at how quickly some within the church had abandoned, not only the grace of God, but the Lord who called them into His grace. This wasn't just a matter of entertaining another line of thought, this was an abandonment of truth and the Lord Himself. These had deserted genuine faith for a lie.

➤ It is amazing how quickly some can be led away from truth into error. The prosperity gospel and the social gospel are other "gospels" being preached today that abandon the foundations of the faith and focus on humanistic needs rather than spiritual needs. A movement or doctrine may have gained prominence in society, but that is no genuine proof the doctrine is true. It ought to alarm any born-again believer when considering the false doctrine being embraced today.

B. Paul's Conviction (7) – Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. While some may have viewed these teachings as “another” gospel, (possibly in their mind, a different point of view), Paul declared this was no gospel at all. In fact, such teaching was guilty of perverting the true gospel of Christ. To **pervert** “carries the idea of *turning something into its opposite, of reversing and thereby perverting it*. The least bit of law that is added to the gospel of Christ reverses its character and turns it into that which is contrary to God’s gracious provision of salvation and sanctification based entirely on the merits of His sinless, sin-bearing Son.”ⁱ

➤ As believers, committed to the true gospel, we must stand firmly upon the truth of the gospel. There is no other gospel than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any doctrine that adds to or takes away from the finished work of Christ upon the cross and His glorious resurrection for the salvation of mankind is a false gospel. We are not commanded to keep ordinances or work to earn our salvation. Genuine salvation is obtained through responding in repentance and faith when being confronted with the gospel. **Rom.1:6 – And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**

II. A Sobering Designation (8-9) – Paul reveals a sobering declaration regarding those who would preach any variation of the gospel other than the true gospel. This is quite convicting when we pause to consider the implication it brings. Consider:

A. The Certainty of the Gospel (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.** Paul is fully confident in the truth of the gospel and it serving as the foundation of faith. There is no other gospel than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was so certain of the truth of the gospel that he encouraged the church to reject anyone, himself and angels included, who would preach an alternate gospel. (Now clearly, Paul is speaking hypothetically here. He does not imply that an angel from the presence of God in heaven would dare speak contrary to the gospel. His point is well made though – if that were to happen, even the angel should be dismissed as a false teacher.)

B. The Reality of the Accursed (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 is emphatic in regard to those who preach any other gospel than that which the Galatians had received, (the true gospel of Christ) – they are to be accursed. This is translated from the Greek word anathema, and means “*that which is dedicated to destruction; to be accursed.*” **1 Cor.16:22 – If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,** (“the Lord has come.” In this context, Paul refers to the approaching judgment when the Lord returns.)

➤ This is a sobering reality regarding those who purposely teach and promote a false gospel. Paul, in essence declares, these are worthy of eternal damnation. This doctrinal truth puts things into perspective when considering the truth of the gospel and the Word of God. Those who handle it falsely, leading others in deception, will face the wrath and judgment of God. [2 Tim.2:15-16 – Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.](#) ¹⁶ [But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.](#)

III. A Sovereign Revelation (10-12) – Finally, Paul affirms the gospel he preached came not from man, but from the Lord. He was not seeking to please men, but God. We discover:

A. A Stirring Challenge (10) – [For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.](#) Paul asks a couple of simple, yet profound, questions. Whom does it appear that Paul sought to please? Was he seeking the favor of men, or God? He knew his life and testimony stood above reproach. Anyone who knew Paul would have to admit that he was committed to pleasing the Lord regardless of the opinions or pressures of others. If his desire was to please men, he would not be in the position he currently held. He had abandoned the life that many sought to press upon the Galatians for liberty in Christ.

➤ This challenge provides a genuine test to determine the doctrines men share and the motives they possess. In their teaching and promotion of doctrine, do they seek the favor of God, or men? Do they strive to please others, or the Lord? If one is committed to the gospel, as Paul was, the world will not approve. Those who are surrendered to the Lord usually do not please men, and those who sell out to the world cannot please God. [1 Thes. 2:3-4 – For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:](#) ⁴ [But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.](#)

B. A Settled Conviction (11) – [But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.](#) Paul could honestly and unashamedly affirm that the gospel he preached was not of man's wisdom or desire. He preached the truth he had encountered in Christ and received of Him. Paul's language is emphatic, seeking clarity and certainty of being understood. It is to say, "Let me make this perfectly clear..." While others may have embraced a false gospel, Paul remained committed to the true gospel. He preached grace alone in Christ alone, apart from any works of man.

C. A Spiritual Comprehension (12) – [For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.](#) The true gospel Paul proclaimed came directly from the Lord. He had

not received it or heard it from another. The doctrine he preached, particularly the gospel, had been revealed to him by Christ the Lord. He had no fear of human contamination or personal agendas being promoted in the gospel he preached. The Lord had revealed the truth he was to proclaim, and Paul preached that truth without apology. “That was what had saved him! Grace and grace alone! In a flash, the light dawned. It was not law; it was grace. It was not works; it was simple faith. It was not Moses; it was Christ. It was not Sinai; it was Calvary. It was not to be earned; it was to be received. It was not trying; it was trusting,” Phillips. ⁱⁱ

➤ As believers in general, and teachers of the Word in particular, we too must ensure the gospel we proclaim is true. Unlike Paul, we cannot proclaim that we have not received this gospel apart from human means and transmission, but we can ensure that it adheres to the pure doctrines of the faith proclaimed by Paul and the apostles. When one begins to add to the gospel, or take away from the gospel, in any way, one has produced a false gospel. We must commit to sharing the gospel revealed of Christ.

Conclusion: I pray the Lord will grant us wisdom and boldness to stand for the truth of the gospel, being willing to share its gracious riches with those who have yet to hear while confronting the false doctrines that are being propagated by many today. We cannot deny or abandon the truth. Apart from the gospel truth, Christianity would cease to exist.

ⁱ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Galatians](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 15.

ⁱⁱ John Phillips, [Exploring Galatians: An Expository Commentary](#), The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publishers; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ga 1:12b.