

The Apostle Paul was surprised that the Galatians had strayed from the gospel that they had believed for salvation and had begun to trust in the keeping of the law instead of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The purity of the gospel of grace is so important that Paul gave the stern warning that anyone who would pervert the gospel of Christ would be cursed by God.

1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

“Paul, an apostle [delegate; messenger; someone sent with orders]” – In some of the greetings of Paul’s epistles he introduces himself as an apostle, while in others he merely mentions himself as a “bondservant of Jesus Christ.” Here, Paul seems to be introducing himself as an apostle in order to emphasize the authority with which he is writing. He will be correcting some doctrinal problems in the churches of Galatia and his authority as an apostle give the Galatians a reason to listen and obey. He further emphasizes in vs. 11-24 that not only did the gospel that he preached come from God but his calling as an apostle did as well.

“not of men, neither by man” – Paul wants the Galatians to understand that his apostleship was not of human origin. Even if other apostles had decided to appoint Paul to be an apostle (“not of men”) or if Paul had declared himself to be an apostle (“neither by man”), neither method would have given him the authority to speak for God.

“but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead” – The Galatians had been saved by believing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and this same Jesus Christ is the One Who chose Paul to be an apostle. The gospel they believed included the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the One Who raised Christ from the dead (God the Father) was also in agreement in making Paul an apostle. Paul wants the Galatians to understand that his apostolic authority came from both Jesus Christ and God the Father.

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

“And all the brethren which are with me” – In addition to this epistle being from himself, Paul also mentions his fellow workers in the gospel ministry that traveled with him and helped him minister to the churches. At the time of writing to the Galatians, this likely included Silas and Timothy as well as others. Paul often listed them by name in his greetings but this time he chose not to do so. Perhaps he wanted to get to the point of his epistle as soon as possible.

“unto the churches of Galatia” – Paul specifies to whom this epistle is written: the churches residing in the region of Galatia. Galatia was a Roman province in the central region of Asia Minor (in modern day Turkey). Paul established several churches in Galatia during his missionary journeys, such as Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. This is his only letter addressed to multiple churches.

3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“Grace *be* to you and peace” – This is one of Paul’s typical greetings, in which he expresses his desire that the Galatians receive and benefit from God’s grace and peace. Grace is seen in the forgiveness of their sins and the peace comes from the fact that they are no longer estranged from God because of their sins and are now in fellowship with Him.

“from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ” – The specific grace and peace that Paul desires for the Galatians is the kind that can only come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This grace and peace can only come through Christ because of His death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, which were accomplished by the will of the Father (v. 4).

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world” – Paul reminds the Galatians that Jesus Christ gave Himself on the cross in order to rescue us from the penalty of our sins. One of the reasons Christ gave Himself for us is to rescue us from the current evil world system, all its sinful influences and the judgment that is pronounced upon it.

“according to the will of God and our Father” – Christ’s incarnation, death on the cross, and resurrection was according to the will of God the Father in order to accomplish the redemption of those who would believe (**John 6:37-40** “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*”). All of this was part of the gospel that Paul preached to the Galatians.

“To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen” – Paul is attributing eternal glory to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ since our redemption was orchestrated by both.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

“I marvel [to be amazed] that ye are so soon removed [to transfer; to exchange]” – Paul is surprised and amazed that these Galatian churches seem to have abandoned Christ for an alternate means of salvation. The Greek word translated “removed” implies that they have abandoned trust in Christ for salvation in exchange for trusting in their ability to keep the law in order to be saved.

“from him that called [to invite; to call by name] you into the grace of Christ” – The one calling was not Paul since he was only the messenger delivering the message. Rather, it was Christ Who was inviting the Galatians to salvation by His grace.

“unto another [another of a different kind] gospel [good news]: Which is not another [another of the same kind]” – The Galatians were exchanging the grace of Christ for “another” gospel that was different from the one that came through Christ. Paul emphasizes that this gospel is not the same but a different gospel based on different principles than the grace of Christ.

“but there be some that trouble [to agitate; to cause distress] you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” – There were false teachers who were causing the Galatians to worry about their salvation because they were teaching that trusting in Christ was not enough for salvation and that believers also needed to keep the Mosaic Law. This was a distortion of the Gospel of Christ.

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.

Verses 8-9 indicate how serious of an offense it is to corrupt the gospel of Jesus Christ and that God condemns those who teach/preach a corrupted gospel.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you” – The purity of the gospel is more important than the credentials of the preacher and to emphasize this point Paul uses two extreme and unlikely messengers of a false gospel. The Galatians first heard the gospel through Paul and his companions, and it was through this gospel that they were saved. Paul says that even if he and his companions returned and preached another gospel (an extremely unlikely possibility), then it should be rejected. Even if an angel from heaven, which would carry the credibility of coming from the presence of God, preached another gospel (also an extremely unlikely possibility), then it should be rejected. If the most respected preacher in the world suddenly started preaching a “new revelation” that contradicts the gospel taught in the Bible, then both he and his message should be rejected. Sadly, there are many teachers/preachers on “Christian TV” today who preach/teach a corrupted gospel based on their own imagination and using scriptures twisted out of context to support their teachings. Such people and their message are under the condemnation of God.

“let him be accursed [*anathema: devoted to destruction*]” – The fate of false teachers has already been decided by God because the eternal fate of men and women hangs in the balance. The Greek word translated “accursed” refers to something/someone devoted to destruction and does not seem to allow for the possibility of repentance. No genuine Christian could purposely contradict the gospel taught in scripture (**1 Cor. 12:3** “*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*”).

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.

The purity of the gospel is of such importance that Paul felt compelled to repeat the warning against those who would corrupt the gospel. The condemnation of false teachers is repeated, defined as those who preach any other gospel than the one that they have received. The Greek word for “received” means “to accept as true” and carries the implication of obedience. While Paul is definitely referring to the gospel that he initially preached to the Galatians, he is not saying that they should trust it merely because it was the first gospel that they heard. He is saying that they should trust the gospel that he preached because it brought them salvation when they accepted it as true. Any other gospel was therefore false and anyone guilty of preaching another gospel has been devoted to destruction by God.

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.

“For do I now persuade [*to convince; to gain the favor of*] **men, or God? or do I seek to please men?”** – This verse leads into v. 11, where Paul states that the gospel that he preached did not come from men and then elaborates further in the verses following. If the gospel had come from men then it would have been designed to please men in order to gain their acceptance. Here, Paul asks the rhetorical question of who he is trying to please, men or God? The gospel of Jesus Christ is not pleasing to men because it says that we are helpless sinners in need of a Savior. Men love to be able to earn their salvation, which is why all other religions of the world have a list of works that men must do to earn the favor of their god. Christianity states that men are destined for hell and that the grace of God given through faith in Jesus Christ is the only means of forgiveness and redemption.

“for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” – Christ is the One Who originated the gospel that Paul preached, so if he exchanged Christ’s gospel for a gospel that pleased men then he would be disobeying Christ and would therefore not be His servant.