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**A0948 – November 29, 2009 – Galatians 1:6-9 – The Finality Of
The Gospel**

Alright, we're working through Paul's letter to the Galatians. Galatians is Paul's first letter to be included in the canon of Scripture and so it's early in Paul's own spiritual development and it's dealing with basic Christian doctrine. That's what this series focuses on, basics, this is not advanced doctrine; this is basic doctrine, what the Bible calls milk doctrine. Since milk is crucial to proper growth and development then not knowing these basics means improper growth and development. So whether you've been a saint for ten minutes or ten years these truths are basic to the Christian life and if you go wrong here then Paul says you've fallen from grace, you've fallen from grace orientation. It's not that you lost your salvation or something it's just that you can't grow, you can't advance spiritually. And God wants you to advance spiritually. God wants you to grow from infancy to adulthood.

Now, the two doctrines that Paul says are crucial to your spiritual life as a Christian are the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and sanctification by the Spirit of God and not by the works of the flesh. The doctrine of justification by faith we'll just call the gospel message because that's the heart of it. The gospel answers the question, "How is a man made right with God?" That's the most important question in life and that's the question Paul is dealing with in Galatians. That question has been given hundreds if not thousands of wrong answers. There is only one right answer and that answer has to be guarded with great care.

Let's look at some of the wrong answers. There are three categories of wrong answers. This isn't details; this is just overall what the big errors are. Of course, if there's an error that presupposes there's a standard that's been broken so what's the standard, what's the gospel. The gospel is justification

by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, that's the standard. And any violation of that standard is not the gospel. Now the attacks on that doctrine are incessant, they come from inside the church and from outside the church. They come from men as high up as Peter and Barnabas all the way down to people we don't know. So don't think that just because someone is prominent or has been a bible teacher for years means they have the gospel right. Peter himself distorted and destroyed grace just by refusing to eat with Gentiles. Even certain behavior can distort the gospel which shows you that heresy is not limited to what you say verbally; your very actions can contradict the gospel and you would be a heretic when you do that. And so, no one is free from the danger of becoming a heretic. Let's look at the three ways you can become a heretic on the gospel. What are the basic distortions of the gospel?

The first big distortion of the gospel is the basis, the basis by which we are saved which is God's grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It means you didn't do any works to earn it, you couldn't do any works to earn it because you couldn't do any, you were dead in sin, you were minus assets. What are you going to give God when you have nothing He's interested in? He's just not interested. He's interested in someone with assets and that someone is Jesus Christ alone. Now the main example of the means of God's grace being distorted is the Roman Catholic view. They distort grace by saying that grace is dispensed incrementally to the person through Mother Church as the seven sacraments are observed by the person. On one hand Rome says that there is grace, (they're not saying salvation is not by grace), but they are saying that the grace is dispensed a little bit here and a little bit there in response to the works of the sacraments. And what they mean by grace being dispensed is that there is a great treasure chest of merit in heaven and that treasure chest is filled with the merit of Christ, Mary, Peter and other saints throughout Church History and when you do the works of the seven sacraments then Mother Church, through the Pope, dispenses grace to the person in the *process* of justification. Justification in Roman Catholic theology is a process. It is not an instantaneous legal declaration, you are not imputed righteousness, righteousness is infused into your heart, your heart is changed over time, and justification is a process of inner transformation. And what that means is that justification in Rome is not centered in Christ in heaven it is centered in your heart on earth. Catholicism corrupts grace by incrementally dispensing it in response to man's works and thus turning the

doctrine of justification into a process that is heart centered rather than heaven centered. Now you can read the NT and read the NT and read the NT and you will never find these things in the Scriptures. That's one of the problems the Reformers were having. This stuff just isn't in the Bible, this is not the gospel and therefore we know what Paul would have thought of it because he tells us twice in the passage.

A second distortion of the gospel throughout church history is to confuse the means of salvation, the means is faith. Faith is simply agreeing with a proposition. One distortion of this today is Lordship Salvation. Rome distorts grace, Lordship Salvation distorts faith and they distort it by saying that true faith includes obedience, commitment, submission, perseverance and they roll all these concepts into faith so faith becomes this big package and now they've distorted the gospel another way because now the means for God to justify is more than what the Bible really says. Faith isn't all those things. Faith is agreeing with a proposition. I'm agreeing that what Christ did on the cross for my sins and what He did by rising from the dead is sufficient for my salvation.

A third distortion of the gospel is to change the content that one has to believe. What do I have to believe in order to be saved? Obviously I have to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But who is He? What did He do to save me? An example of how this is distorted is the crossless gospel. The crossless gospel says that you don't have to tell a person about the cross work of Christ, you just tell a person to believe in Jesus for eternal life. And if a person believes in Jesus then they are justified. Now this distorts the gospel because you haven't given the person enough content to believe. Jesus is just a name, a lot of people in Mexico and Israel are named Jesus or Joshua so if you just tell a person to believe in Jesus I'm still wondering which one; who is He, what has He done for Me, who am I believing in, who is this Jesus. And so it's just not enough to say believe in Jesus for eternal life. That's the crossless gospel and frankly it's a contentless gospel which is no gospel at all.

All three of these basic distortions have been tried. These aren't the only examples; I just give you a few prominent examples. There are hundreds of others but they all fit in three categories: distortions of grace, distortions of faith and distortions of the content.

So the first issue in our passage today is that there is only one gospel and any distortion, ever so slight, of this one gospel is no gospel at all.

The second issue in this passage is the authority of Scripture. Once the Scripture came into existence through men of the Church what is the relationship of the Church to the Scriptures? Does the Church have authority over the Scripture? Or do the Scriptures have authority over the Church? A fundamental question. Does the Church have the authority to dictate to us what it means? I guarantee that if you start talking to a Roman Catholic in our town about this or that in the Bible, something that opposes Roman Catholic doctrine, then they'll say, well, I need to talk to my priest about that, he'll tell me what it means. Why? Because Rome teaches that Mother Church gave us the Bible and therefore Mother Church is the final interpreter of the Bible and you are not free to disagree with them to remain in good standing with Mother Church. So Rome stands over the Scriptures. Protestants have a very different answer: the Scriptures stand over the Church. Once the Scriptures came into existence the very men who wrote those Scriptures were subject to the Scriptures. So a very different answer is given on the question of authority by Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. It's a fundamental question: where is authority located, in the Church or in the Scriptures?

Now, to handle these two issues we understand that Paul was a theological genius and when he wrote he couldn't quite move the pen as fast as he could move through the chain of logic in his head. So sometimes, by pen, he will skip steps in the argument and that means you have to really slow down and think what Paul is going through to get to this conclusion: let them be damned. And so you'll have to think and that's a real chore today because we aren't trained to think, we just watch TV, and TV doesn't require you to think, TV is a passive activity, so it may take a few brain cells today to follow the chain of Paul's logic.

Galatians 1:6-9 Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὗτος τάχεις μετατίθησθε ἀπο τοῦ καλῆς ἐπιστάσεως ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ] εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ⁷ὃ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἄλλο, εἰ μὴ τινες εἰσὶν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. ⁸ἅλλα καὶ εἰάν τις ἐμεῖς ἐγγέλλῃ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐαγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἐστί. ⁹ὅς προεἰρεκάμεν καὶ ἀρτί παλιν λέγοι: εἰ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεσθαι παρ' ὃ παραλαβέτω, ἀνάθεμα ἐστί. (Transliteration of NA27)

Galatians 1:6-9 I am shocked that you are so quickly abandoning your loyalty to He who called you by the grace of Christ to a different gospel, ⁷that is not another, except that there are some who are throwing you into confusion and wanting to change the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven might preach a gospel contrary to you contrary to the gospel we preached to you, let him be anathema. ⁹As we said before so now I say again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to that you received, let him be anathema. (Author's translation)

Galatians 1:6-9 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But 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! ⁹As 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! (NASB95)

Now verse 6 is very strange because in almost every one of Paul's letters after the salutation, which ends in verse 5, there are words of thanksgiving to God. Galatians is his only letter where there is no thanksgiving to God. Why? Because there is no reason to thank God. The Galatians have departed from the gospel of the grace of Christ and therefore there can be no thanksgiving; instead a curse is leveled on anyone who brings a different gospel.

And therefore verse 6 he says **I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.** Now the word **amazed** is a strong word of "astonishment." In the present tense its continual action, Paul's continually amazed **that**, purpose clause, **that they are so quickly deserting Him**, not the gospel directly, but **Him** in whom the gospel is sourced, that is in God. To desert the gospel is to desert God Himself. And once you've deserted God you've deserted the only source of spiritual growth. So if you jump off the ship you can't reach the ship's destination and if you desert God who called you by the grace of Christ you can't expect to grow spiritually. And Paul says I'm just shocked that you are doing this. It hasn't been six months since you believed the gospel and you're already deserting Him who called you by His grace? What is wrong with you people? And what's wrong is they're a bunch of flakes. And they're flaking

out. And they had begun running well, Paul had come in with the gospel of the grace of Christ and they heard the gospel of the grace of Christ and they believed the gospel of the grace of Christ. And just six months later the Judaizers came in and started saying, now faith isn't enough, you've got to do more, you've got to get circumcised, you've got to do the works of the Law of Moses; Paul didn't give you the whole gospel story. And Paul says I am just **amazed** at you people that you would **so quickly** desert God who called you through the **grace of Christ** for this nonsense.

And notice who called who? Did they call God to save them? Or did God call them? God called them. It's the article with the participle emphasizing divine initiative. You didn't just wake up one day and start looking for God, baloney. What does Ps 14 say? There is none who seeks God. What does Rom 3 say? There is none who seeks God. Both the OT and NT agree that no man seeks God. So if you are seeking God it's because God is first seeking you. And if you are a believer here today it is because God sought you, He called you, just like He called Abraham. Abraham wasn't seeking God; Abraham was having a time over in Ur worshipping the moon god. Abraham was carrying on his business and building a family as they worshiped down at the local pagan temple. But God called him out because God is a God of grace and God called you out because God is a God of grace. And the aorist tense of the participle **called** means that God's called them through Paul's preaching of the gospel when he journeyed there in Acts 13-14. It shows you God is sovereign over history because Paul was exactly where God wanted him to be to preach the gospel at that very moment to call these people out of the world system.

Now what's the basis? **grace**, the **grace of Christ**. Grace is unmerited favor towards man because His justice has been met totally in the death of Christ. And therefore it is by grace, it is not by works of the law. If it was by works of the law then no flesh would be justified. If it were by works of the law grace would no longer be grace (Rom 11:6). And so they started running well but then something happened, end of verse 6. They abandoned the gospel of grace for what?

For a different gospel which is, verse 7, **not really another**. Now there are two words there that contrast the gospel of the grace of Christ with the gospel of the works of the Law, what Paul calls a **different gospel, which is not really another** gospel. The first word for **different** is *heteros* and the

second word for **another** is *allos*. *Heteros* and *allos*: these two can be synonyms but they also have a shade of difference. The first word *heteros* means another of a different kind. The second word *allos* means another of the same kind. So whereas *heteros* is comparing apples to oranges, *allos* is comparing two different apples. And what Paul is saying is you've gone over to a gospel of a different kind. The gospel the Judaizers preach is so inferior it doesn't even compare. They preach a gospel of works by keeping the Law, I preach a gospel of grace by faith in Christ. And the gospel of works by keeping the Law is so fundamentally different from what I preached to you that it is therefore no gospel at all, for there is only one gospel period. "There can be no 'other gospel' (ἄλλο εὐαγγέλιον) in the proper sense of the word 'gospel' than the proclamation of justification by faith, apart from works of the law."¹

only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. Now these are the Judaizers who were **disturbing** them, that's political language. If you've seen the work of political agitators who cause confusion and turmoil, that's how Paul pictures the Judaizers, they cause confusion. One of the strategies of Satan is always confusion, you can imagine the mental turmoil this caused the Galatians who thought they were saved and had peace with God and then these disturbers came in and unsettled their souls telling them they had not done all that was necessary to be saved and have peace with God.

The second thing: not only did they disturb them but they also **distort the gospel of Christ** and they did it purposefully, they wanted to distort the gospel of Jesus Christ, this is a calculated assault on the gospel. Now why would you want to do that? Why would you calculate an attack on the gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, first of all there's always a satanic motive underlying and the underlying motive always has as its core element to draw attention away from Christ and to something else. This is always an element of false gospels, your attention is over here on Christ where it should be and they try to draw your attention away from Christ and direct it to themselves, the church, Mary, some organization, ritual, tradition, some gimmick, but in every case it will do this. That's why Heb 12:2 says keeping our eyes on Jesus

¹F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians : A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Includes Indexes. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 81.

because there's a constant attack on the gospel to get our eyes off of Jesus and on something else.

Now the something else the Judaizers got their focus on was circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses. So the first thing they said was you've got to be circumcised to be justified before God. Faith is fine but faith isn't enough - it's faith + circumcision = justification, that's their formula. To see this turn to Gal 5:2 and let's walk through some verses (cf Gal 5:2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; 6:12-15). Now, today we don't have so much problem with circumcision but we have other problems and it would be like someone coming in and saying, well, faith isn't enough, you've also got to get baptized. Faith + water baptism = justification, that's one of the tenets of Church of Christ. Acts 2:38 is the John 3:16 of the Church of Christ theology. And they think if they beat Acts 2:38 to death they'll get you to admit you've got to be water baptized. Baloney, that message is directed to the nation Israel and the kingdom is being offered to the nation. I challenge anyone to show me that verse is directed toward Gentiles. It has nothing to do with Gentiles. Now faith + water baptism is a distortion of the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ because the only thing that is consistent with grace is faith. That's Rom 11:6 and Rom 11:6 stands forever and the rebuttal to any of the faith plus gimmicks. It may be faith + prayer, it may be faith + commitment, it may be faith + perseverance, it may be faith + whatever, you fill in the blank, but if it's faith + anything other than the grace of God it equals nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing because you've destroyed grace. Now sometimes you may hear about this word repentance. Faith + repentance and there is a sense in which repentance is involved in faith, but not as a second and distinct requirement to be justified. In other words it's not faith + repentance. Faith + repentance would still equal nothing because what these people mean is that repentance means I've got to turn from my sins. But that's not a biblical meaning of repentance, that's the Latin meaning of repentance which comes from the word for penance, do penance. But that's not what repentance means in the Greek NT. In the Greek NT it means a change of mind and of course when a person has faith in Christ there is a change of mind about Christ, but that repentance is not a second act separate from faith, it's part and parcel with faith. Faith and repentance when they relate to justification, in the biblical sense, are two sides of the same coin, they are inseparable. If a person comes along and says you've got to have faith + repentance, that's a distortion of grace. That's Latin theology not biblical theology. So justification is by grace alone through

faith alone in Christ alone. If you add anything else it's a distortion of the gospel.

Now why did these Judaizers want to distort the gospel? We already said one reason was to draw their attention away from Christ and get it over on the ritual of circumcision. Another reason we learn later in Galatians is that they feared persecution from fellow Jews. A third reason is because they wanted to boast in their foreskin. So this was the kind of thing going on in Galatia.

Acts 1:8, **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!** Now this is the first of two curses Paul levels at anyone who preaches a different gospel than what he and Barnabas preached to them. What is the gospel Paul and Barnabas preached? Let's go back to Acts 13. What is the gospel? This is a baby question; the answer is so simple and so straightforward in the word of God that if people would stop listening to what their denomination says and just read the Bible they would see very clearly what the answer is. We've already covered the answer but let's read again from Acts 13, Paul's gospel to the Galatians, the same people Paul is writing this letter to just a few months later. Acts 13:23. This is the gospel they heard and this is the gospel they believed and this is the gospel they were departing from. Verse 23, "From the descendants of this man," that's David, he's talking about King David here and the promises made to David that he would have a seed that would be the Messiah, the Savior, "From the descendants of this man God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus," identification of the Savior as Jesus. Verse 27, "For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him ²⁸"And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. ²⁹"When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰" But God raised Him from the dead; ³¹and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people ³²"And we preach to you the good news," alright there's our word for gospel, *euangelizo*, it means "good news" or "good tidings." So you can see right there the elements of the gospel. They are the same elements as are found in 1 Cor 15:1-4. And they amount to the death of Jesus Christ for our sins and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's the gospel and

if anyone says something else is the gospel, whether they are priest or Pope, friend or foe, man or woman, Jew or Greek, slave or free, seminary trained or not, it doesn't make one particle of difference their station in life, where they live, what sex they are, what color their hair is, how good a speaker they are, how many degrees they have, it makes no difference, if anyone says the gospel is something other than what we just read that person is to be damned. If I preach something other than that I am to be damned. It's not the gospel. The gospel is a gospel of grace not of works. The gospel is not go to church, sign a commitment card, walk an aisle, get water baptized, ask Jesus into your heart, I spoke in tongues, I quit drinking, do the sacraments, make Jesus Lord of your life, confess your sins or any of that; the gospel is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now come down to verse 38, "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses." Now there's only one condition there for man: to believe and by believing in Christ who died for us and rose from the dead we are freed from the penalty of sin, we are justified. There's no other way. We are justified by faith alone and not by the Law of Moses. Now think about who's saying that? Just think about it. If ever there was a man who tried to be justified by the Law of Moses it was Paul. Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the Law, he was excelling beyond many of his contemporaries, he was the number one student of the great Rabban Gamaliel, one of only seven Jewish rabbi's to be given the title Rabban. And if Paul came along and says you can't be justified through the Law of Moses then nobody can be justified through keeping some law through works. Not Mother Theresa, not Ghandi, not Mary herself. It's just impossible he says. And besides, if somebody could be justified by doing the works of the Law, if just one person could do it, then the cross of Christ is totally unnecessary. If a person can be justified apart from Christ why do you need Christ? So this is the gospel of justification by faith that Paul received on the Damascus Road in Acts 9, this is the gospel Paul preached to the Galatians in Acts 13, this is the gospel that they heard, this is the gospel they believed and this is the gospel for all time. It has never changed, it never will change, it never can change, and it is absolutely written in stone. And I don't care if an angel shows up at your bedside and gives you a different message. If that happens Paul says the angel is wrong and let the angel be damned. Now

those are pretty strong words, but I hope by the end of this you'll see why Paul had such strong words for those who would contradict, malign and distort the gospel of Christ. So we want to understand why Paul said let them be damned.

Now I don't care what you think about the preacher, if he preaches the gospel right that's great, if he doesn't, let him be damned. The messenger and his character are secondary to the message he preaches. Of course he should have a good character but the point is that character is secondary to the message he preaches.

Now look at verse 8 because he begins with a 3rd class condition, **if we...should preach.** *ean* with the subjunctive. Condition of the 3rd class. Maybe we or an angel would preach a contrary gospel, maybe not, but if we do then the condition being filled LET HIM BE ANATHEMA. And that goes for me too, if I should preach another gospel than the risen Christ delivered to Paul on the Damascus road and that he preached to the Galatians then I am to be anathema. And Paul says it's a possibility, it is possible for me to distort the gospel. Here, in a few verses, Paul relates how Peter distorted the gospel. So though this is an infancy doctrine it's very possible to depart from it and preach a false gospel.

Now the implication of what he's saying here is that once Paul preached the gospel to the Galatians it was set in stone forever to the point not even he himself could change it. And this brings us to the second big issue in the text today, the question of authority. Here's the argument of Rome. Rome argues that Mother Church authored the Scripture, and since Mother Church authored the Scripture, then Mother Church is the final interpreter of the Scripture. It sounds impressive; you can build an impressive case. Didn't the Church give us the NT? Now we can get caught in this kind of thinking, think back a minute. In the OT what was the human tool that generated the OT. It wasn't the Church, it was Israel. So it was Israelite prophets that gave us the Scripture? Yes. Once the Scripture was given, was Israel free to change it? Or was the Scripture like concrete, once you mix cement with water and gravel it hardened up and became a standard. That's the point. Forget about the Church, Rome, and Protestantism, let's go back to the OT and think.

In the OT the Scriptures came and according to Deut 13 and 18 it became the standard by which all subsequent prophets had to adhere. So we have the standard given through the human instrument of Israel, but it's God giving it through Israel, and therefore it's God's word and Israel herself has to submit to that. In the NT here's the analogue to that argument. Gal 1:8, here's Paul, the human instrument of a lot of NT epistles that talk about the gospel. Look at this sentence and think about it for a minute. The Apostle Paul, does he have authority? Yes, he's one of the apostles and the apostles were the foundation of the Church. Is the Church producing the gospel? Yes, through Paul. But what does he say in verses 8-9. He says "But even though we" he and Barnabas, both apostles, and any good Roman Catholic theologian will tell you that Paul's on a par with the Pope, he's up here on the authority chain, "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." What's the internal logic of that sentence? Can Paul change his mind? Once he has taught the gospel and it's been authenticated by signs and miracles can even Paul change it? No, he can't. Therefore can the Church change it? No, it can't. Once the gospel comes into existence the Church must submit to the Bible. The Bible, not the Church, is the final authority. That's the Protestant point. It's not that we don't like the Church, it's not like we're not saying there's a lot of things difficult in the Scripture, we're simply saying the Church has got to be submissive to the authority of the Scripture, once the Scripture is authenticated in history.

And so Paul says if anyone preaches a gospel contrary esto anathema, let him be anathema. Now the background of anathema is in Josh 7:12 and has to do with the rules of holy war. There were two kinds of war in the OT, one was just regular war and the procedures for regular war were used for people outside the Promised Land. The second kind of war was holy war and the procedures for holy war were used for people inside the Promised Land. And in Holy War it was total annihilation, total extermination, everything living was under the herem or ban. In fact, the word herem or ban is the same word we know as harem. And if a king has a harem we all know what that means, that mean the girls in the harem are off limits, they're his women and you don't touch his women. And that's what the rules of holy war were all about, those people were scheduled for destruction and so they were off limits. You didn't keep any of them alive because they weren't yours to keep alive, they were God's and God said kill them. There's a reason for that we've been

through that had to do with the conquest period being a foretaste in history of God's final judgment but we can't go into that here. The point is that if someone brings a false gospel let them be anathema, let them be excluded, don't touch them, don't listen to them because they are under the judicial wrath of God. And literally this says let them be damned and commentators don't like it that Paul says that but that's what Paul says (and Paul is an apostle and his word is authoritative) so tough, you may not like it but that's what Paul says, let them be cursed. Now why does Paul say that? Here's where you have to think through the chain of logic that I mentioned earlier, Paul skips some steps and goes right to the conclusion. But this is the chain.

The Judaizers said you've got to be circumcised and you've got to do the Law of Moses to be justified. Paul said if you get circumcised Christ is of no effect to you. Christ and circumcision and Christ and the Law of Moses are antagonistic to one another in Paul's thinking. Paul says now look, if you believe in Jesus Christ then logically the Law of Moses is out. Christ replaced the Law of Moses and therefore if the Law of Moses is in force as a way of justification and sanctification then logically Jesus was not the Messiah. And in that case Jesus was rightly convicted and sentenced to the cross because his messianic claims were false. And therefore, logically, what you're saying is that Jesus was anathema and so Paul says if anyone teaches that Jesus is anathema then he himself is anathema. That's the problem; their teaching logically implied that Jesus was anathema (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3).

Acts 1:9 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! Now when you see that kind of repetition you know it's important. And so he says, **As we have said before** perfect tense, that may be back when they were in Galatia, maybe they warned them of false gospels when they were there, or maybe he's just referring back to verse 8, but in any case it's serious enough to say again. **if any man is preaching** and here *ei* + indicative signals the 1st class condition. It is assumed to be true that they are. If any man is, and he is, then LET HIM BE ANATHEMA. He calls down a curse on any one who proclaims a gospel to them contrary² to what they

²A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), Ga 1:9.

received (*paralabete* - the two words are used of the receiving and handing on of tradition.³), esto anathema, let him be damned.

Because there is only one gospel that results in a man being made right with God, the gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This is the message that Paul received directly from the risen Christ; this is the message that the Galatians received directly from Paul and this is the message that not even Paul or an angel or a church or anybody can change. It is the final gospel message. And anyone who tries to manipulate, distort, change or nuance is to be damned.

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³F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians : A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Includes Indexes. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 84.