

Galatians 1:6-9 – How quickly Christians can stray from the truth

TSK, GreekLexicon, Reinecker, Trapp, Robertson, Poole, Lightfoot, JFB, Geneva, Family, Clarke, Henry, Handfuls, Abbot, Barnes,

Beloved in the Lord: The Galatians, who were Celts, were known to be fickle people. They could change their allegiance in a hurry.

Julius Caesar wrote: "**The infirmity of the Gauls (Celts) is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and not to be trusted.**"

These were the people in the church in Galatia. This puts into perspective what the Apostle Paul was facing. Old habits die hard.

Now after greeting the Galatian Christians, reminding them they were eternally justified, Apostle Paul got to the meat of the message: "**I rebuke you for not being careful with the Gospel and being easily deceived about the way you are saved.**"

And indeed, **their being deceived was threatening the very Gospel of Jesus Christ** – which was really an attack on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

So Apostle Paul had to speak up! This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The Galatians quickly abandoned truth

The Galatians warned not to abandon truth

Our goals are: **That in a world wrecked by compromise, you will hold on to the Gospel truth, live it, and promote it, so Jesus will get his rightful glory.**

The Galatians quickly abandoned truth

6 I marvel that you are **turning away so soon** from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to **a different gospel**, 7 **which is not another**; but there are some who trouble you and want to **pervert the gospel** of Christ.

1. Apostle Paul was shocked and continued to be shocked (and in disbelief) as Christians in Galatia had quickly abandoned the Gospel of grace alone, by faith alone, for the glory of Christ alone, for a Gospel of salvation by works (and some grace)!

This would have happened in **less than 3 years**, but **more likely, less than 1 year** after he left them.

This type of quick falling away after revival is not uncommon and has recurred

throughout history.

The Reformers, for instance, worried the beautiful and biblical doctrine of justification by faith would die out when they died. It did.

2. What the Christians in Galatia started to believe was truly a different Gospel, which was not the Gospel at all.

After all, none would be able to achieve salvation if it had to be by good works. So it was a different Gospel. It wasn't a "saving Gospel." It was a "works Gospel." But man could not add a sigh for his salvation.

It is sad these Judaizers not only influenced the easily-influenced Celts, but they also influenced some of their own from the Jewish community!

Acts 15:5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Someone said trying to gain salvation by good works is like a camel washing his feet in water that he has to drink.

You wouldn't want to drink the best milkshake even if it had a tiny amount of salmonella, would you?

"Turning away so soon" was a very strong term and was used to show soldiers deserting the army or revolting against higher officers.

Apostle Paul used this phrase to show Christians were abandoning their claim to the kingdom of God as no one could claim right to Christ's kingdom by his own good works. They were not only abandoning the kingdom, they were also revolting against its King!

3. Apostle Paul then called out the ones who were teaching salvation by good works, calling them "trouble-makers."

"Trouble" meant to shake back and forth. This was what these Judaizers were doing to people of God.

The Judaizers were rejecting the glorious sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus said: I am the way... And there is "salvation in no other name..."

They were rejecting God's Spirit who called them and pulled them to him.

But this trouble the trouble-makers caused did not come by force but by trickery.

Galatians 3:1 O **foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you** that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

4. What kind of trouble did teaching this false way of salvation cause?

It caused a lot of trouble. For one, many of the converts who were deceived underwent circumcision. This was how Celts were trained from youth: Do something to get blessings from God! They had become Christians, but their weakness became apparent.

Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, **these would compel you to be circumcised,** only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

But it was wrong for Christians to resort to things like circumcision. Those things **no longer had any benefit.** Their purpose was complete. They pointed to Christ and his work! Their mission was accomplished.

Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 5:2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you **that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.** 3 And I testify again to every **man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.**

So doing *some good works* did not earn them salvation...or even help earn them salvation. To earn salvation by good works they had to be perfect inwardly and keep the whole law perfectly – inwardly and outwardly. But no one could do that!

5. Lessons:

a. God saluted his people, meaning he did not have anything judicially against them, but *paternally – as a father, he did.* He had declared them justified for eternity in Jesus, but sin remained and he had to deal with that as a good Father.

b. Notice how the Apostle Paul plunged right into the *desire for the glory of God by dealing with the dangerous doctrines that had infiltrated the church.* This is why you must correct those who have fallen into dangerous doctrines. God's glory!!!

c. Don't be afraid to call out those who trouble the church of Jesus, inside or outside, and cause the church to abandon sound doctrines! Consider some examples of things you need to call out.

There was much optimism for the church in the 18th and 19th century, but with the advent of the World War 1, many people abandoned the hopefulness and starting praying for the Jesus to snatch his people out from earth.

In the 1980's, a denomination called the Church of Christ vigorously promoted that baptism was necessary for salvation and many left orthodox churches to join.

Modern doctrines, reflecting modern psychology, taught that children did not benefit from in worship, so children up to 12 were routinely put in storytelling classes and picture coloring class instead of worship.

In modern times, preachers have adjusted the Gospel by adding humanism and social justice to it, so you are not considered a good Christian if you don't support feminism and other woke ideologies.

Don't be deceived! Study God's Word and when convinced with true doctrines, confront these sins! Expose false teachers.

d. The enemies of the church do not have to use force to destroy the church. They rarely do.

When they **use force** as is common in places like China and Iran, **the Gospel spreads.**

Instead, the enemies of Christ's church prefer to **use trickery** – make the **church think everything is okay,** but working to destroy it in the background – **usually by half-truths!**

e. Some people are only constant in their hopping, skipping, and their jumping in their doctrines. They don't take the time to really study their doctrine and come to a good conclusion. You must not follow their example.

The Galatians warned not to abandon truth

8 But even **if we,** or an **angel from heaven,** **preach any other gospel** to you than what we have preached to you, **let him be accursed.** 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

1. Apostle Paul warned the Galatians not to be deceived by *any other teaching from any other man other than which they heard from the beginning when they believed in Jesus.*

2. Apostle Paul warned that even *if he taught something else than which they heard from the beginning when they believed in Jesus, they should reject it.*

3. Apostle Paul said that even *if an angel from heaven taught something else than which they heard from the beginning when they believed in Jesus, they should reject it.*

“Angel” is used not in heavenly beings only, but people who were viewed as godly.

Galatians 4:14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but **you received me as an angel of God**, even as Christ Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 13, he warned that those who spoke like angels but didn't have love, were wicked.

In Deuteronomy 13, God warned that prognosticators **who spoke contrary to his word** were subject to death.

In 1 Kings 13, God warned that those who followed those who taught a different message from God were subjected to death.

1 Kings 13:18 He said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (He was lying to him.)

You know what happened to this prophet who was deceived by the lying prophet! He was killed by a lion.

In Matthew 24, Jesus warned believers to reject those who would bring contrary messages before Jerusalem fell.

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and **false prophets** will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

4. Apostle Paul taught the ones who taught anything other than which they heard from the beginning when they believe in Jesus, *should be accursed by God.*

“Accursed” meant to condemn to hell. It is what you heard about recently: asking God to damn someone. For good measure, Apostle Paul repeated the damnation of

anyone who attempted to change the Gospel.

He did so to show the danger of *changing the Gospel* or introducing something alongside it.

5. Lessons:

a. Hold on to the ways God has marked for you. God saved you from the curse of the law, but he has not removed the command of the law. God's law does not change and cannot change.

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, **And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it;** Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

b. More specifically, God's way of salvation cannot change. Adam was saved by Jesus – by grace alone through faith alone...and you can only be saved in the same way.

So don't wander away and try to earn your salvation by doing moralistic things and "treating others as you wish to be treated." Those things are good but they are not the Gospel.

c. You can still live in the midst of a corrupt church without being corrupted.
Galatians 6:16 *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.* It is true the church is warning against judging others today but not as concerned about warning people about the judgment of God.

But you can still believe and promote truth – even in a weak church.

d. Apostle Paul assigned great blame to the false teachers who preyed on weak, newer believers!

These same false teachers continue to day.

They say things like, "**God has no hands but yours,**"

"**You have to love yourself before you can love others,**"

"**Learn to accept others for who they are,**"

"**The church can all have different understanding of human sexuality.**"

e. "Anathemas" are not for differences in minor things. They are for very serious sins like heresies.

f. “Anathemas” are not for personal disagreements. The church condemns the wicked. So anathemas are not a tool for personal revenge.

Conclusion:

The Judaizers were pressuring new Christians to **dismiss their proper understanding of salvation – salvation which came by grace through faith** and not by good works.

The Judaizers wanted young Christians to **bring in good works in place of grace through faith** or **alongside grace through faith** for their salvation.

So Apostle Paul rebuked the young Christians for falling for these lies. And he pronounced an eternal curse on the Judaizers for lying to young Christians and mocking the Gospel of Jesus.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Know these false teachers are alive and well in the churches today. They look like good preachers. They talk like good teachers. They are friendly like good preachers. But they are snakes.

2. Don’t fall for their lies. Know God’s Words so you won’t be deceived. Salvation is not by kindness or giving money to the poor. Salvation is not treating others with respect. Salvation is not staying sexually pure. Salvation is receiving God’s grace through faith – both being his gifts. These other things come as a result of salvation!

3. Be bold to challenge deceitful preachers. Stand up to friends who minimize the work of Christ by saying **salvation comes by good works**, or **salvation comes by grace alongside of good works**. **Tell them Jesus did not come to give a moral example**...but to be an eternal sacrifice for sins...and only that saves!

Finally: If you are a not a Christian, it doesn’t matter how much good you do or how much people like you, you will go to hell, unless you cry out for salvation through Jesus Christ. He gives you faith to receive his grace! What is his grace? He died as a substitute for sinners.