

Exegetical Notes for Galatians 1:6-9

KEY

ATR = Robertson, A.T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933.

BAG = Bauer Arndt and Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

Calvin = John Calvin. *Calvin's Commentaries: Galatians*.

Carson, Moo, Morris = D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*.

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Comfort = Philip W. Comfort. *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*.

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Guthrie = Donald Guthrie. *New Testament Introduction*.

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Luther = Martin Luther. *Commentary on Galatians*.

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Metzger = Bruce M. Metzger. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*.

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Stott = John Stott. *The Message of Galatians*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971.

Strauss = Lehman Strauss. *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1957.

UBS = Arichea, Daniel C., and Eugene Albert Nida. *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1976.

Wallace = Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Wuest = Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Wright = Wright, N.T. *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Ephesians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Parsing Verbs and Declining Nouns

Verbs:

ποιμάνετε (ποιμαινῶ = to tend, shepherd || Verb: Aorist Active Imperative, Second Person Plural).

ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι (ἀποκαλύπτω = to reveal, disclose || Verb: Present Passive Infinitive).

Nouns (gender before case):

παθημάτων, (παθημά = suffering || Noun: Neuter Genitive Plural).

Participles (gender before case):

μελλούσης (μελλῶ = to be about to || Participle: Feminine Genitive Singular Present Active).

Adjectives (gender before case):

(ἐπιεικής = gentle, kind || Adjective: Masculine Dative Plural).

Independent Personal Pronouns:

ἡμῖν (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

ὑμῖν (σύ = you || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

αὐτῷ (αὐτός = He, Him || Third Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Masculine Dative Singular).

Demonstrative Pronouns (gender before case):

(τοῦτο = this || Near Demonstrative Pronoun: Neuter Nominative Singular).

Reflexive Pronouns (only masculine and feminine - the genitive is the lexical form as there is no nominative case):

(ἐμαυτοῦ = myself || First Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

(σεαυτοῦ = yourself || Second Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

(ἐαυτοῦ = himself, herself, oneself || Third Person Reflexive Pronoun: Masculine Genitive).

Sentence Structure

Sentence

[^{Sentenc}_e] 6 Θαυμάζω

θαυμάζω
VPA11S
25.213

I am astonished

Subordinate Clause ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε
ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθημι
CSC B B VPUI2P
90.21 78.4 67.110 34.27
that so quickly you are turning
away

Prepositional Phrase ἀπὸ
ἀπό
P
34.27
from

Relative Clause τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς
ὁ καλέω σύ
DGSM VAAP-SGM RP2AP
92.24 33.307 92.7
the one who called you

Prepositional Phrase ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ]
ἐν χάρις Χριστός
P NDSF NGSM
89.84 88.66 93.387
by the grace of Christ

Prepositional Phrase εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον,
εἰς ἕτερος εὐαγγέλιον
P JASN NASN
13.62 58.36 33.217
to a different gospel

Relative Clause 7	ὁ	οὐκ	ἔστιν	ἄλλο	,
	ὅς	οὐ	εἰμί	ἄλλος	
	RR-NSN	BN	VPAI3S	JNSN	
	92.27	69.3	13.1	58.37	
	that	not	is	a different	
Subordinate Clause	εἰ	μή	τινές	εἰσιν	
	εἰ	μή	τις	εἰμί	
	CAC	BN	RX-NPM	VPAI3P	
	89.131	89.131	92.12	13.1	
	except	-	some	there are	
Relative Clause	οἱ				
	ὁ				
	DNPM				
	92.24				
	-				
Predicate	ταράσσοντες	ὑμᾶς			
	ταράσσω	σύ			
	VPAP-PNM	RP2AP			
	25.244	92.7			
	who are disturbing	you			
<i>[Relative Clause (continued)]</i>	καί				
	καί				
	CLN				
	89.92				
	and				
Predicate	θέλοντες				
	θέλω				
	VPAP-PNM				
	25.1				
	wanting				
Infinitival Clause	μεταστρέψαι	τὸ	εὐαγγέλιον	τοῦ	
	μεταστρέφω	ὁ	εὐαγγέλιον	ὁ	
	VAAN	DASN	NASN	DGSM	
	13.64	92.24	33.217	92.24	
	to distort	the	gospel	of	

Χριστοῦ.

Χριστός
NGSM
93.387
Christ

Sentence

[^{Sentenc}_e] 8 ἀλλά και

ἀλλά και
CLC CLA
89.125 91.12
but even

Subordinate Clause ἐάν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος
ἐάν ἐγώ ἢ ἄγγελος
TC RP1NP CLD NNSM
89.67 92.1 89.139 12.28
if we or an angel

Prepositional Phrase ἐξ οὐρανοῦ
ἐκ οὐρανόσ
P NGSM
89.3 1.11
from heaven

[Subordinate Clause (continued)] εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν]
εὐαγγελίζω σύ
VPMS3S RP2DP
33.215 92.7
should proclaim a gospel to you

Prepositional Phrase παρ'
παρά
P
89.137
contrary to

Relative Clause ὃς εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν ,
ὅς εὐαγγελίζω σύ
RR-ASN VAMI1P RP2DP
92.27 33.215 92.7

what we proclaimed to you
 [Sentence (continued)] ἀνάθεμα ἔστω .
 ἀνάθεμα εἰμί
 NNSN VPAM3S
 33.474 13.1
 accursed let him be

Sentence

Subordinate Clause 9 ὡς
 ὡς
 CAM
 64.12
 as

Segment Clause προειρήκαμεν
 προεἶπον
 VRAI1P
 33.86
 we said before

[Subordinate Clause (continued)] καὶ
 καί
 CLN
 89.93
 and

Segment Clause ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω .
 ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω
 B B VPAI1S
 67.38 67.55 33.69
 now again I say

Subordinate Clause εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται
 εἰ τις σύ εὐαγγελίζω
 CAC RX-NSM RP2AP VPMI3S
 89.65 92.12 92.7 33.215

if anyone you is proclaiming a gospel
Prepositional Phrase παρ'
 παρά
 P
 89.137

contrary to
Relative Clause ὁ παρελάβετε ,
 ὅς παραλαμβάνω
 RR-ASN VAAI2P
 92.27 27.13
 what you have received

[^{Sentenc}_e] ἀνάθεμα ἔστω .
 ἀνάθεμα εἰμί
 NNSN VPAM3S
 33.474 13.1
 accursed let him be

Sentence

[^{Sentenc}_e] 10 ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ
 ἄρτι γὰρ ἄνθρωπος πείθω ἢ
 B CLX NAPM VPAI1S CLD
 67.38 89.23 9.1 33.301 89.140
 now for people making an appeal to or

τὸν θεόν ;
 ὁ θεός
 DASM NASM
 92.24 12.1
 God

Sentence

[^{Sentenc}_e] ἢ ζητῶ
 ἢ ζητέω
 CLD VPAI1S
 89.139 25.9
 or am I
 seeking

Infinitival Clause ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν;
 ἄνθρωπος ἀρέσκω
 NDPM VPAN

9.1 25.90
people to please

Sentence

Subordinate Clause εἰ ἔτι ἀνθρώποις ἤρεσκον ,
εἰ ἔτι ἄνθρωπος ἀρέσκω
CAC B NDPM VIAIIS
89.65 67.128 9.1 25.90
if still people trying to please

[^{Sentenc}_e] Χριστοῦ δοῦλος οὐκ ἂν ἦμην .

Χριστός δοῦλος οὐ ἂν εἰμί
NGSM NNSM BN TC VIMIIS
93.387 87.76 69.3 71.14 13.1
of Christ a slave not - be

Albert L. Lukaszewski and Mark Dubis, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament* (Logos Bible Software, 2009), 493.

6 I am astonished

(that you are)

so quickly deserting

Him

who called you

by the grace [of Christ]

for a different gospel—

7

which is not another—

only there are some who are disturbing you

and want to pervert

the gospel of Christ.

8

But even if

we

or an angel from heaven

should preach to you

a gospel

contrary to that

which we preached to you,

let him be accursed.

9 As I have said before,

I now say again:

if anyone

is preaching to you a gospel contrary

to that which you received,

let him be accursed.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

GREEK TEXT:

6 Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ] εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, 7 ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, εἰ μὴ τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 8 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. 9 ὡς προειρήκαμεν καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω· εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. Galatians 1:6–9 (NA27)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel— 7 which is not another—only there are some who are disturbing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As I have said before, I now say again: if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Why is it foolish to believe in a different gospel?

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's the passage saying about what it's talking about): Because the end of it is destruction.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): To embrace a different gospel is to believe a lie and face eternal condemnation.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: When the Only Alternative to the Authentic is an Anathema Stick with the Authentic.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: "The Devastating Danger of Desertion"

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous? (6-9)

- A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ (6a)
- B. Because Alternate Gospels (Like Alternate Realities) Don't Exist (6b-7a)
- C. Because the Authentic Gospel is as Immutable as God's Nature (7b)
- D. Because an Anathema is Promised as an Eternal Consequence (8-9)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Without any words of commendation for the Galatians, Paul launches into his corrective with dismay (“I am astonished”) over their quick defection, while warning them of impending doom for any who embrace a false gospel. This passage sets the tone for Paul's upcoming defense of his apostleship and the gospel of grace, two themes that run parallel t/o the letter.

Background of the Judaizers . . . Professed Christians from Jerusalem, the background of which is Acts 15. They likely had a single powerful leader that was at the forefront of the Galatian opposition (cf. 3:1, 5:7,10).

Circumcision was their keystone as a mark of being under the law (5:2-6; 6:12). 4:10,21 indicate that they were attempted to integrate all of the Law into Christianity as a basis for justification. To be circumcised and to keep the law = to be under the covenant, apart from which there is no salvation. Law = bondage / Christ = freedom (cf. 4:1-5:15). No doubt, a big part of this was Jewish nationalism and a refusal to see Gentiles as equals (cf. 3:28). Cf. Acts 11:2-3, 15:1, 21:20.

Cf. Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (s.v. *Judaizers*).

Helpful excursus by Timothy George in his New American Commentary on the nature of Heresy:

EXCURSUS 1: THE NATURE OF HERESY

Paul's anathema against the false teachers of Galatia raises the question of the nature of heresy and its persistent presence throughout the long history of the Christian church. The word “heresy” derives from the Greek noun *hairesis*, which means literally an “act of choice.” This word is used several times in the New Testament in a neutral sense meaning simply “party” or “distinct group” (cf. Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5). Elsewhere, however, it assumes a more negative connotation, referring to a faction or splinter group whose ethical or doctrinal “choices” have resulted in the disruption of the Christian community (cf. 1 Cor 11:19; Gal 5:20). By the second century heretics were identified as those persons whose teachings on fundamental Christian truths deviated so radically from the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles as to undercut the very basis for Christian existence.

Today the word “heresy” frequently is touted as a badge of honor, a mark of theological innovation and creativity, while “orthodox” is often a term of disparagement meaning “old-fashioned, unyielding,” and, above all, “deadly dull.” Thus the late Episcopal bishop J. Pike defended his deviant doctrinal views in a personal manifesto entitled *If This Be Heresy*. About the same time W. Kaufmann, a Princeton philosopher, published his intellectual autobiography which he called *The Faith of a Heretic*. Heresy must be defined in terms of an assumed orthodoxy. Hence Pike was at least correct in identifying his revisionist theology as heretical, while Kaufmann, a self-proclaimed atheist, advocated a system of unbelief very different in both its affirmations and denials from what can properly be called heresy.³⁹¹

1 ³⁹ See the excellent discussion in H. O. J. Brown, *Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1–5. Cf. the following definition by K. Barth: “By heresy we understand a form of Christian faith which we cannot deny to be a form of Christian faith from the formal standpoint, i.e., insofar as it, too, relates to Jesus Christ, to his church, to baptism, Holy Scripture and the common Christian creeds, but in respect of which we cannot really understand what we are about when we recognize it as such,

As Paul and other Christian heralds carried the message of Jesus Christ into the marketplace of ideas throughout the Hellenistic world, they were forced to define their proclamation over against Judaism on the one hand and paganism on the other. However, the distortions and misrepresentations that arose from within the Christian movement proved far more insidious to the survival of the church than external threats. Thus not only here in Galatians but elsewhere in the New Testament we find repeated warnings against those who are wont to “abandon the faith,” giving themselves over to “godless myths and old wives’ tales ... things taught by demons ... hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than Christ” (1 Tim 4:1, 7; Col 2:8). More positively, Paul encouraged Timothy to hold on the pattern of sound doctrine and to “guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit” (2 Tim 1:14).

In guarding the church against doctrinal corruption, the apostles and church fathers had to be especially alert because inevitably heresy arose not as a frontal assault on Christianity but rather as an alluring, seductive distortion of some valid theological principle. For example, Irenaeus observed: “Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced (ridiculous as the expression may seem) more true than truth itself.”⁴⁰ There is an old Latin proverb that says, *Corruptio optimi pessimum est*, “The corruption of the best is the worst.”

The heretics of Galatia did not deny that Jesus was the Messiah or that he had died and risen from the grave. Nor did they claim some new and special revelation; rather they based their arguments on the Old Testament Scriptures. They had many valid theological ideas with which Paul himself was in perfect agreement: the oneness of God, the holiness of the law, God’s faithfulness to his people Israel, the importance of the Ten Commandments, and so on. So far as we know, they did not openly deny either the deity or humanity of Jesus Christ. Their error was to add to the finished work of Christ a measure of human achievement as the basis of a right standing with God. Yet to do this was to change the nature of the Christian faith so drastically that it could no longer be trusted to be saving faith. Hence it was necessary for Paul to identify and condemn this teaching with all the force of an apostolic anathema. As D. Bloesch has wisely written, “Saving faith cannot be maintained apart from contending faith, the faith that vigorously upholds the integrity of the gospel against all efforts to embellish it with other gospels.”⁴¹

Today in the polite circles of mainline Protestantism, heresy in its historic Christian sense has become a most unfashionable word. In much contemporary theology, biblical miracles are demythologized and classical Christian doctrines devalued in the name of a faith that emphasizes a subjective relationship with Christ, or at least a vague spiritual awareness of him, at the expense of the embarrassing doctrinal accoutrements the church has proclaimed as indispensable ever since Nicea and Chalcedon.

The New Testament, however, nowhere presents a “relation with Christ” apart from a theological affirmation of his person and work. When Paul said to the Philippian jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31), he was indeed making a profound doctrinal claim about the One he believed could deliver him from his sins. “Christ” was not Jesus’ last name, nor “Lord” his first! These were messianic titles fraught with rich theological meaning. The essence of Christianity is knowing and trusting Jesus Christ, not in the abstract but precisely as Lord, the incarnate Son of God, as Prophet, Priest, and King, as Savior, Redeemer and Victor. Thus the earliest portrayal of the New Testament church depicts a band of committed believers who “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine”

since we can understand its content, its interpretation of these common presuppositions, only as a contradiction of faith” (*Church Dogmatics* 1.1 [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.], 32).

40 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.2.

41 D. Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 139.

(Acts 2:42).

What should be our attitude toward heresy today? First, we must learn to distinguish between evangelical essentials, over which there can be no compromise, and secondary doctrinal matters about which orthodox believers may differ and still maintain the bond of Christian fellowship. Where to draw this line, of course, is not always easy, but failure to do so will lead to theological vacuity on the one hand or sectarian rigidity on the other. Second, we should recognize that in the providence of God, heresy has sometimes served a useful purpose in calling forth a clearer definition of the true faith. For example, Marcion's rejection of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture accelerated the formation of the New Testament canon, while Pelagius's merit-based soteriology prompted Augustine's exposition of the doctrines of grace. Similarly, the rationalistic assault against the authority of the Scriptures during the Enlightenment gave rise to clearer definitions of biblical inspiration and inerrancy that still guide believers today. Third, we must always be careful to distinguish the heresy from the heretic. We are called to speak the truth in love, not to shout the faith in anger. There is no place for censorious personal attacks against anyone made in the image of God, however serious their theological deviations may be.

At the same time, while renouncing cruelty to heretics, we must ever guard against what F. Allison has called "the cruelty of heresy."⁴² The church of Jesus Christ must be willing to recognize and to reject gross perversions of the gospel when they crop up in its midst. A church that cannot distinguish heresy from truth or, even worse, that no longer thinks this is worth doing is a church that has lost its right to bear witness to the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ, who declared himself to be not only the Way and the Life, but also the Truth, the only Truth that leads to the Father. The ancient words of Polycarp are relevant still: "Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the Word which has been handed down to us from the beginning."⁴³

42 C. F. Allison, *The Cruelty of Heresy* (Harrisburg: Morehouse, 1994).

43 Polycarp, *Epistle* 8.

2 Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 102–105.

1:6 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ] εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον,

Θαυμάζω (Θαυμάζω = to marvel, be astonished || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 1S). Descriptive Present. “The verb translated surprised includes an element of intense unbelief.” [UBS]

ὅτι οὕτως (οὕτως = thus, so || Adverb).

ταχέως (ταχέως = quickly || Adverb).

μετατίθεσθε (μετατίθημι = to turn away, desert || Verb: Present Middle/Passive Indicative, 2P).

Reflexive Middle (voluntary). Perfective Present. “The present tense indicates that when Paul wrote, the defection of the Galatians was yet only in progress. Had he used the perfect tense, that would have indicated that the Galatians had actually and finally turned against grace and had come to a settled attitude in the matter.” [Wuest]

ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος (καλέω || Participle: Masculine Genitive Singular Aorist Active). God the Father is always the one who calls when used by Paul.

ὑμᾶς (συ || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Accusative Plural).

ἐν χάριτι (Noun: Feminine Dative Singular). Dative/Locative of Sphere.

[Χριστοῦ] (Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular). Metzger grace “C” - options include 'Ιησου Χριστου, Χριστου 'Ιησου, θεου, and omit.

εἰς ἕτερον (Adjective: Neuter Accusative Singular).

εὐαγγέλιον, (Noun: Neuter Accusative Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel—

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

I am astonished (Θαυμάζω)

Θαυμάζω has been rendered “astonished, marveled, amazed, astounded, surprised” and was a common literary device used in Greek letters to express irritation, irony, shock. Present tense. “Scratching one's head in disbelief, pondering how this can be so.” There are lots of things that do this to me. I am astonished at how Christians can have such a low view of the local church, for example.

that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ (ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι [Χριστοῦ])

ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος (καλέω || Participle: Masculine Genitive Singular Aorist Active). Note the aorist. God the Father is always the one who calls when used by Paul. Deserting God the Father who called them by the grace of Christ. Or, if the variant be omitted, Deserting Christ who called them by His grace.

Romans 11:29 – calling irrevocable. There are some (hyper-calvinists) who see no reason to warn believers of the danger of desertion. We live in an eschatological tension / already not yet.

οὕτως om G 1 al || Χριστου P51 & A B Ψ byz latf vg syrpes copbo / Ιησου Χριστου D 326
syrhcl / θεου 7 327 Origlat / om P46vid G Hvid lata b vg.cod Mcion Tert Cypr Ambst Pelag
Ephr

Exodus / Golden Calf as an illustration of a quick defection. Cf. use in 2 Peter.

The shock was due to the fact that their desertion had occurred “so quickly” (a phrase that could refer either to the short time that had elapsed since Paul first preached the gospel in Galatia, or that the Galatians had defected from the gospel of grace immediately after they heard the Judaizing message). Likely Paul refers to the former (Eg. the early date for the letter).

It is clear from Acts 13:14 that God had greatly blessed the missionary efforts of Paul and Barnabas in the cities of South Galatia despite the strong opposition they encountered there. Many new believers were won to Christ, churches were planted, elders appointed, and miracles displayed. Now, in the afterglow of this great awakening, the Galatian Christians for whom Paul harbored such great hope were at the very point of abandoning the gospel itself. Doubtless this accounts for the tone of dismay we hear in this verse and throughout the letter. “I am astonished... You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?... You were running a good race. Who cut in on you?” (1:6; 3:1; 5:7).

[review the chronology of Paul's establishing the Galatian churches, the entrance of the false teachers, Paul's letter, and his revisitation]

A man labors for a decade before he succeeds in training his little church into orderly religion, and then some ignorant and vicious poltroon comes along to overthrow in a minute the patient labor of years. By the grace of God we have effected here in Wittenberg the form of a Christian church. The Word of God is taught as it should be, the Sacraments are administered, and everything is prosperous. This happy condition, secured by many years of arduous labors, some lunatic might spoil in a moment. This happened in the churches of Galatia which Paul had brought into life in spiritual travail. Soon after his departure, however, these Galatian churches were thrown into confusion by the false apostles. The church is a tender plant. It must be watched. People hear a couple of sermons, scan a few pages of Holy Writ, and think they know it all. They are bold because they have never gone through any trials of faith. Void of the Holy Spirit, they teach what they please as long as it sounds good to the common people who are ever ready to join something new. We have to watch out for the devil lest he sow tares among the wheat while we sleep. No sooner had Paul turned his back on the churches of Galatia, than

the false apostles went to work. Therefore, let us watch over ourselves and over the whole church. [Luther, Galatians]

We are reminded here of how fragile young believers are, how susceptible to the blandishments of the Evil One. Nothing delights the devil more than to disrupt and destroy, insofar as he can, a true work of God. Whenever there is a genuine moving of God's Spirit or a major advance in missionary outreach, we can be sure that Satan and his minions will have a vested interest in casting doubts, sowing discord, and wreaking havoc. So it was among the churches of Galatia. Paul responded to the situation there not merely in anger and irritation but with a love and concern that went deep enough to confront. He prayed for them, wrote to them, and later revisited them because he took with utmost seriousness the work of "evangelistic follow-through." We do poor service to Christ and his church when we indiscriminately lead men and women to profess faith in Christ but then leave them vulnerable, like the exposed infants of ancient Rome, to the ravenous wolves that seek their destruction. [Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 90]

Not a genuine believer can forfeit his/her salvation. This is the eschatological tension of perseverance, election, and eternal security. Cf. 2 Peter 1. Already but not yet. We don't rest easy – ever – but especially for a new convert (as the case here). Danger of apostasy and modern examples. Apostasy on the rise in the west. Fits Premil and Amil understanding. Longer I study t/Bible and history, t/more I see how non-biblical so much of our understanding of salvation is (goes back to t/19th c. - decisional regeneration, altar calls, etc.)

Paul's surprise stems from the fact that *in no time at all* the Galatians *are deserting* the one who called them. *In no time at all* translates an expression which may refer to (1) the pace of their desertion after it has begun; (2) the short time between their conversion and their desertion, or (3) the short time between Paul's last visit to them and the writing of this letter. While all three interpretations are possible grammatically, most commentators favor the second of these alternatives.³

The word *deserting* carries with it the idea of changing one's mind, of a willful forsaking of one's former loyalty and adoption of another. Paul's use of the present tense suggests that the process of desertion is still going on, and that it is not yet complete, and therefore it is still possible to check it. In some languages the term *deserting* may be rendered as "abandoning," "leaving to the side," or even "going off and forgetting."

μετατίθεσθε (μετατίθημι = to turn away, desert || Verb: Present Middle/Passive Indicative, 2P). Reflexive Middle (voluntary). Perfective Present. "The present tense indicates that when Paul wrote, the defection of the Galatians was yet only in progress. Had he used the perfect tense, that would have indicated that the Galatians had actually and finally turned against grace and had come to a settled

³ Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 11-12.

attitude in the matter.” [Wuest]
Akin to a military deserter.

μετατίθημι lit. “to bring to another place.” [cf. TDNT, 8.161] Word used in this lit sense in Heb 11:5 to describe Enoch’s translation from earth to heaven. 18x in the LXX translates Hebrew words meaning “to transplant,” “to set in another place,” “to alter or change.”

“From these meanings it was extended metaphorically to one who had changed allegiance from one country to another, a political traitor, or one who had switched sides in an armed conflict, a military deserter. Paul claimed the Galatians were spiritual turncoats! That he used this verb in the sense of a continuous present, “you are deserting,” “you are in the process of leaving,” indicates that their apostasy is not yet complete. Obviously the false teachers had made great inroads among them; the situation was desperate, but not beyond hope. Paul was “hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair” (2 Cor 4:8). Later in the letter he expressed confidence that they could be recovered, and he reminded them that they would “reap a harvest if [they] do not give up” (Gal 5:10; 6:9). [Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 91.]

Reading may be simply χάριτι (textual addition of [Χριστοῦ]). Metzger gives the present reading a “C”.

Apostasy in various forms. Two basic forms: those who forsake the faith for a non-faith (agnostics, atheists, practical atheists); those who forsake the faith (once for all delivered to the saints, Jude) for a false faith. Both are due to disbelief. The Galatians were falling prey to the latter, a different gospel.

for a different gospel— (εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον,)

The background of the substantive εὐαγγέλιον and its related verb εὐαγγελίζουσι, as used in the NT, must be sought here and there in Is. 40–66. The good news of Zion’s liberation and restoration, celebrated in Is. 40:9. ὁ εὐαγγελιζόμενος Σειῶν, ‘O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion’ (cf. Is. 60:6 LXX⁴, τὸ σωτήριον κυρίου εὐαγγελιοῦνται), is interpreted in the NT as adumbrating the good news of a greater liberation and restoration—the salvation procured by Christ. The words of Is. 52:7, ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνῃ, ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθά, are supplied by Paul in Rom. 10:15 to preachers of the Christian gospel. In Is. 40–66 it is Yahweh himself who is ultimately proclaimed in the good news: the herald is told to ‘say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” ’ (Is. 40:9). So in the NT the bearers of the gospel summarize their commission in words such as these: ‘what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord’ (2 Cor. 4:5). This comes close to the Hellenistic usage of the word-group, which has to do with ‘the God-Emperor who is venerated in the cult and the εὐαγγέλιον which proclaims him’ (J. Schniewind, *Euangelion*, II [Güttersloh, 1931], 183). Most important of all texts in Is. 40–66 for the NT usage is Is. 61:1, where an unnamed speaker introduces himself by saying, ‘The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed me to bring

good tidings to the poor' (LXX⁵ εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς). In Lk. 4:17–19 Jesus is depicted as reading this scripture in the Nazareth synagogue and applying it to himself—newly anointed, 'made Messiah', for the proclamation of the gospel. Not only so, but in the earlier 'Q' incident of Jesus' reply to John the Baptist's message from prison (Lk. 7:22; Mt. 11:5) the fact that 'the poor have good news preached to them' (πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται) is emphasized as the conclusive proof that Jesus is indeed the 'coming one' to whom John had pointed forward.⁶

Heterodoxy and Heresy. This isn't going from one Xn denom. to another // theological persp. to another. This isn't changing teams, it's being out of the league entirely.

In Paul's writings "he who calls" is synonymous with God, as can be seen in Paul's two other uses of it in Galatians (1:15; 5:8; but see also Rom 4:17; 9:12; 1 Thess 2:12; 5:24). The Galatians were deserting the God who calls—the God who called the world into existence by his creative power, the God who raised Jesus from the dead, the God who wrought the miracle of conversion in the Galatians themselves. True, they also were deserting Christ, Paul, and the gospel he had preached. But these defections could perhaps be explained away through clever manipulation. After all, it could be said, both Paul and his opponents believed in Jesus Christ. Both had a message about being right with God and preached it with apparent sincerity. Among the various churches and sometimes within a single church (e.g., Corinth) are different personalities, various methodologies, and distinct political groupings. Why should Paul have had the final or authoritative word? Doubtless this kind of reasoning must have gone on within the Christian circles where Paul and his entourage moved. Paul, however, adamantly refused to reduce the conflict in Galatia to the level of personality, ideology, or church politics. [Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 92.]

Cf. 5:4.

2 Corinthians 11:4 Another Jesus (ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν [*allon Iēsoun*]). Not necessarily a different Jesus, but any other "Jesus" is a rival and so wrong. That would deny the identity. **A different spirit** (πνεῦμα ἕτερον [*pneuma heteron*]). This is the obvious meaning of ἕτερον [*heteron*] in distinction from ἄλλον [*allon*] as seen in Acts 4:12; Gal. 1:6f. But this distinction in nature or kind is not always to be insisted on. **A different gospel** (εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον [*euaggelion heteron*]). Similar use of ἕτερον [*heteron*]. **Ye do well to bear with him** (καλῶς ἀνεχεσθε [*kalōs anechesthe*]). Ironical turn again. "Well do you hold yourselves back from him" (the coming one, whoever he is). Some MSS. have the imperfect ἀνειχεσθε [*aneichesthe*] (did bear with).⁷

5 LXX Septuagint

6 F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 81–82.

7 A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 2 Co 11:4.

Paul uses two Greek words, both of which mean *another*, but which have a further distinct meaning of their own. The first is *heteros* (ἕτερος), the second *allos* (ἄλλος). *Heteros* (ἕτερος) means *another of a different kind*, *allos* (ἄλλος), *another of the same kind*. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) denotes qualitative difference, *allos* (ἄλλος), numerical difference. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) distinguishes one of two. *Allos* (ἄλλος) adds one besides. Every *heteros* (ἕτερος) is an *allos* (ἄλλος), but not every *allos* (ἄλλος) is a *heteros* (ἕτερος). *Heteros* (ἕτερος) involves the idea of difference of kind, while *allos* (ἄλλος) denotes simply distinction of individuals. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) sometimes refers however, not only to difference in kind but also speaks of the fact that the character of the thing is evil or bad. That is, the fact that something differs in kind from something else, makes that thing to be of an evil character. We have the word *heterodoxy*, made up of *heteros* (ἕτερος), and the word *doxa* (δοξα) which means *opinion*. Paul's doctrine of grace is God's truth, and anything that differs in kind from it must necessarily be false doctrine. *Heterodoxy* is false doctrine.⁸

8. *The Use of ἄλλος and ἕτερος Together*. Blass²⁹ finds this “probably only for the sake of variety.” Certainly in 1 Cor. 12:9 f. no real distinction can be found between ἄλλος and ἕτερος, which are here freely intermingled. But I am bound to insist on a real difference in Gal. 1:6 f. The change is made from ἕτερον to ἄλλο for the very reason that Paul is not willing to admit that it is a gospel on the same plane (ἄλλο) as that preached by him. He admits ἕτερον, but refuses ἄλλο. The use of εἰ μή by Paul does not disturb this interpretation. The same thing would seem to be true of 2 Cor. 11:4, ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν—πνεῦμα ἕτερον—εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον. It may be that variety (as in 1 Cor. 12:9 f.) is all that induces the change here. But it is also possible that Paul stigmatizes the gospel of the Judaizers as ἕτερον (cf. Gal. 1:6) and the Spirit preached by them, while he is unwilling to admit another (ἄλλον) Jesus even of the same type as the one preached by him.¹⁰

8 Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Ga 1:6.

9 ² *Ib.*, p. 318.

10 A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 1919), 747.

1:7 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὁ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, εἰ μὴ τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ὁ (ὁς || Relative Pronoun: Masculine Neuter Singular).

οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, (εἰμι || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3S).

εἰ μὴ (εἰ μὴ = except, only).

τινές (τις || Indefinite Pronoun: Masculine Nominative Plural).

εἰσιν (εἰμι || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 3P).

οἱ ταρασσόντες (ταράσσω = to disturb, trouble || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural Present Active). Descriptive Present – they are still in Galatia and doing this. “The verb itself can mean 'to disturb mentally, with excitement, perplexity, or fear' (RSV “trouble,” NEB “unsettle your minds,” NAB “confuse”).” [UBS] Same verb used in Acts 15:24; 17:8.

ὑμᾶς (σὺ || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Accusative Plural).

καὶ θέλοντες (θέλω || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural Present Active).

μεταστρέψαι (μεταστρέφω = to distort, change || Verb: Aorist Active Infinitive). A word that can be used positively or negatively. Basically “to change” or “transform” (neutral or positive). Here it's strongly negative and could be best understood by our Eng. word “pervert.”

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (Noun: Neuter Accusative Singular).

τοῦ Χριστοῦ. (Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

which is not another—only there are some who are disturbing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

which is not another— (ὁ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο,)

Then he says that it is not an *allos* (ἄλλος) gospel. It is not only different in kind. It is not a gospel at all. It is not another gospel even when considered in a numerical way. There can be only one message of good news. *Arthur S. Way* in his excellent translation of Galatians renders *heteros* (ἕτερος) *gospel*, *an opposition gospel*, *allos* (ἄλλος) *gospel*, *an alternative gospel*. Thus, the Galatians were turning to an opposition gospel diametrically opposed to Paul's message of grace, and this opposition gospel was not an alternative one.¹¹

In the previous verse, Paul has just labeled the false teaching as another version of the gospel. Here he is quick to deny that it can even be called that, as he affirms that *there is no* “*other*

11 Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Ga 1:6.

gospel.” Literally rendered, this expression is “which is not another” or “not that it is another” (*NEB*¹² follows the second of these). The apostasy which is affecting the Galatians is simply not another gospel which can be substituted for the gospel which Paul has proclaimed to them.¹³

Unto another gospel; which is not another. Paul uses two Greek words, both of which mean *another*, but which have a further distinct meaning of their own. The first is *heteros* (ἕτερος), the second *allos* (ἄλλος). *Heteros* (ἕτερος) means *another of a different kind*, *allos* (ἄλλος), *another of the same kind*. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) denotes qualitative difference, *allos* (ἄλλος), numerical difference. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) distinguishes one of two. *Allos* (ἄλλος) adds one besides. Every *heteros* (ἕτερος) is an *allos* (ἄλλος), but not every *allos* (ἄλλος) is a *heteros* (ἕτερος). *Heteros* (ἕτερος) involves the idea of difference of kind, while *allos* (ἄλλος) denotes simply distinction of individuals. *Heteros* (ἕτερος) sometimes refers however, not only to difference in kind but also speaks of the fact that the character of the thing is evil or bad. That is, the fact that something differs in kind from something else, makes that thing to be of an evil character. We have the word *heterodoxy*, made up of *heteros* (ἕτερος), and the word *doxa* (δοξα) which means *opinion*. Paul’s doctrine of grace is God’s truth, and anything that differs in kind from it must necessarily be false doctrine. *Heterodoxy* is false doctrine.

When Paul speaks of the Galatians turning to a *heteros* (ἕτερος) gospel, he means that they are turning to a gospel that is false in its doctrine. It is not only different in character from the gospel which he preached to the Galatians, but it is different in a bad sense. It is essentially evil. We have here in the expression, *heteros* (ἕτερος) *gospel*, a contradiction in terms. *Gospel* is from *euaggelion* (εὐαγγέλιον) which means *good news*. There cannot be a *heteros* (ἕτερος) *good news*, that is, a message of good news different in kind from that which Paul preached, and different in an evil sense, and yet be a message of good news. A salvation-by-works message is no good news to a lost sinner, *first*, because the Bible says “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5), and *second*, if salvation would be by good works, one would not know how many good works a person must do to be saved or after being saved, to keep saved. No one could have any assurance of acceptance with God or security in salvation from such preaching. Thus, Paul stamps the message of the Judaizers as heterodoxy, false doctrine.

Then he says that it is not an *allos* (ἄλλος) gospel. It is not only different in kind. It is not a gospel at all. It is not another gospel even when considered in a numerical way. There can be only one message of good news. *Arthur S. Way* in his excellent translation of Galatians renders *heteros* (ἕτερος) *gospel*, *an opposition gospel*, *allos* (ἄλλος) *gospel*, *an alternative gospel*. Thus, the Galatians were turning to an opposition gospel diametrically opposed to Paul’s message of grace, and this opposition gospel was not an alternative one.¹⁴

Another gospel would be like saying “Another God” or “Another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4). Jesus of cults.

The gospel can be clarified and better understood, but it cannot ontologically change – anymore than

¹²*NEB* New English Bible

¹³ Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 13.

¹⁴ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Ga 1:6.

God can. It is the immutable logic of heaven that from the fall of Adam, the only way that anyone can have peace with God is by His grace, through faith, on the basis of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. Progressive revelation and the OT.

Keep in mind that God's grace involves something more than man's salvation. We not only are saved by grace, but we are to live by grace (1 Cor. 15:10). We stand in grace; it is the foundation for the Christian life (Rom. 5:1–2). Grace gives us the strength we need to be victorious soldiers (2 Tim. 2:1–4). Grace enables us to suffer without complaining, and even to use that suffering for God's glory (2 Cor. 12:1–10). When a Christian turns away from living by God's grace, he must depend on his own power. This leads to failure and disappointment. This is what Paul means by "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4)—moving out of the sphere of grace into the sphere of Law, ceasing to depend on God's resources and depending on our own resources.¹⁵

Cf. the supposed gospel of Rome, Brooklyn, Salt Lake City, Princeton Seminary.

only there are some who are disturbing you (εἰ μὴ τινές εἰσιν οἱ ταρασσόντες ὑμᾶς)

οἱ ταρασσόντες (ταρασσω = to disturb, trouble || Participle: Masculine Nominative Plural Present Active). Descriptive Present – they are still in Galatia and doing this. "The verb itself can mean 'to disturb mentally, with excitement, perplexity, or fear' (RSV "trouble," NEB "unsettle your minds," NAB "confuse")." [UBS] Same verb used in Acts 15:24; 17:8.

Same word is used of the Judaizers in Acts 15:24.

Here for the first time in the letter Paul spoke explicitly of the agitators who had caused so much distress to him and to the churches of Galatia. Significantly he did not identify them by name; they simply were "some people." Paul used the plural, for evidently there was a band or at least a team of false teachers disseminating their views among the Galatians. Paul leveled two charges against them: one, with reference to their disturbance of the Galatians; the other, relating to their subversion of the gospel. The Greek verb translated "to throw into confusion" (tarassō) means to "shake," "agitate," or "to excite to the point of perplexity and fear." Here again is an indication of how vulnerable the new Christians of Galatia were to evidently impressive presentations of the false teachers. Paul's second charge against them was that they were perverting, or rather, wanted to pervert, the gospel of Christ. [Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 94–95.]

"These two go together. To tamper with the gospel is always to trouble the church. You cannot touch the gospel and leave the church untouched, because the church is created and lives by the gospel. Indeed the church's greatest troublemakers (now as then) are not those outside who oppose, ridicule and persecute it, but those inside who try to change the gospel." [Stott]

Whenever the gospel is perverted the church is unsettled. To change the message of grace is to stifle and eventually asphyxiate the church. Paul wrote to Titus, "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced

15 Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 684.

because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach” (Titus 1:10–11). The greatest enemies of the church are not those who openly contradict the Bible and denounce Christ but those children of hell, proposing to speak in His name. subtly undermine and distort His true gospel with a system of works righteousness. [John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 15–16.]

and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. (καὶ θέλοντες μεταστρέψαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ.)

The gospel belonging to Christ, or the gospel about Christ.

Not “new and improved.” When good news becomes bad news.

Bob George summarizes how the Judaizers may have attempted to defend their 'message:'

Dear brothers of Galatia, we greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We have heard how through the ministry of Brother Paul you have been converted from the worship of dumb idols to serve the true and living God of Israel. We are glad you have made such a good beginning, but we are afraid that there are some very important things about the gospel Paul has omitted to tell you. We ourselves come from the church at Jerusalem which is directed by the very apostles Jesus called and ordained. Paul though is an upstart. Why, he never even knew Jesus while he was on earth and was certainly never commissioned by him as an apostle. True, Paul did visit Jerusalem just after he stopped persecuting us, and there he learned the ABCs of the Christian faith from the true apostles. But the message he now preaches bears no resemblance to theirs. I don't imagine he even told you about circumcision! Why, this is the very way God has made it possible for you Gentiles to become a part of the New Israel. Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Circumcision is just as important as baptism—nay, more important, for it will introduce you to a higher plane of Christian living. If you will observe this holy ordinance of the law, God will be pleased with you. We are just now forming a new association of law-observant churches, and we would love for Galatia to be represented! We are the true Christians. Jesus, our great example, pleased the Father by fulfilling the law and so can you! [George, 95–96]

“Law does not moderately pollute grace but reverses and destroys it. As a means of salvation, the two are diametrically opposite and cannot coexist. Grace can be destroyed, but it cannot be modified. It can be rejected, but it cannot be changed.” [MacArthur]

Not a drop of poison that you put into a gallon of water and is neutralized. Drop of poison that turns the entire gallon into something else – poison.

“If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law” (Gal. 5:2–4).

So the two chief characteristics of the false teachers are that they were troubling the church and changing the gospel. These two go together. To tamper with the gospel is always to trouble the church. You cannot touch the gospel and leave the church untouched, because the church is created and lives by the gospel. Indeed, the church's greatest troublemakers (now as then) are not those outside who oppose, ridicule and persecute it, but those inside who try to change the

gospel. It is they who trouble the church. Conversely, the only way to be a good churchman is to be a good gospel-man. The best way to serve the church is to believe and to preach the gospel. [Stott, 23]

“To paraphrase this sentence: *These false apostles do not merely trouble you, they abolish Christ's Gospel. They act as if they were the only true Gospel-preachers. For all that they muddle Law and Gospel. As a result they pervert the Gospel. Either Christ must live and the Law perish, or the Law remains and Christ must perish; Christ and the Law cannot dwell side by side in the conscience. It is either grace or law. To muddle the two is to eliminate the Gospel of Christ entirely.* It seems a small matter to mingle the Law and Gospel, faith and works, but it creates more mischief than man's brain can conceive. To mix Law and Gospel not only clouds the knowledge of grace, it cuts out Christ altogether. [Luther]

1:8 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν (= but even if). 3rd class condition.

ἡμεῖς (ἐγώ = I || First Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Nominative Plural).

ἢ (ἢ = “or” || Conjunction).

ἄγγελος (ἄγγελος || Noun: Masculine Nominative Singular).

ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (οὐρανος || Noun: Masculine Genitive Singular).

εὐαγγελίζεται (εὐαγγελίζω = to preach the gospel || Verb: Present Middle Subjunctive, 3S).

[ὑμῖν] (συ || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

παρ' ὃ (ὃς || Neuter Nominative Singular Relative Pronoun).

εὐηγγελισάμεθα (εὐαγγελίζω = to preach the gospel || Verb: Aorist Middle Indicative, 1P).

ὑμῖν, (συ || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Dative Plural).

ἀνάθεμα (ἀνάθεμα || Noun: Neuter Nominative Singular). Cf. Romans 9:3; 1 Cor. 16:22.

ἔστω. (εἰμι || Verb: Present Active Imperative, 3S).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

In these verses Paul intensified the antithesis between himself and his Galatian opponents by pronouncing a solemn curse upon anyone who proclaimed a counterfeit gospel. The fact that Paul issued this condemnation in the strongest words possible and then repeated it for emphasis makes this one of the harshest statements in the entire New Testament. It does not set well on modern ears accustomed to tolerance at any price and a doctrine of God devoid of the notions of judgment and wrath. Yet here it stands, stubbornly and ominously, at the forefront of Paul's concern. [Timothy George, Galatians, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 97]

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, (ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται [ὑμῖν] παρ' ὃ εὐηγγελισάμεθα ὑμῖν,)

εὐαγγελίζεται (εὐαγγελίζω = to preach the gospel || Verb: Present Middle Subjunctive, 3S).

The hypothetical condition *if we ... should preach* must be expressed in some languages as a denied condition, for example “if we ever preach, but we will not do so.”¹⁶

16 Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 14.

In the first place, it is important to see that, hypothetically at least, Paul brought himself under his own curse. “But even if we . . . should preach a gospel other than.” Here Paul showed once and for all that the issue at stake in Galatia was not the messenger but the message. Later in the history of the church, during the time of Augustine, a great dispute arose concerning the sacraments, such as baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and ordination. The question was whether these religious rites were valid and effective when performed by a minister who was morally impure. One party in the dispute, the Donatists, argued that they were not. Their efficacy was tied to the spiritual and moral condition of the presiding minister. Augustine and the majority of others in the church took the opposite view. The sacraments, they said, were *ex opere operato*, that is, they were effective by virtue of the power invested in them by Christ himself and the promise of his Word. At the time of the Reformation, both of these views were subjected to a fresh biblical critique, but the essential point of the Augustinian position was recognized as valid: the true touchstone of doctrinal and spiritual authenticity is God himself, what he has irrevocably done in Christ and infallibly vouchsafed to us in Holy Scripture, and not the qualifications, charisma, or even theology of any human leader.¹⁷

In the second place, Paul brought even the angels within the purview of his anathema. As Luther quaintly put it: “Here Paul is breathing fire. His zeal is so fervent that he almost begins to curse the angels themselves.”³³¹⁸ This is the first of three references to angels in Galatians. In 3:19 Paul referred to the belief that the law was ordained through the mediation of angels, and in 4:14 he reminded the Galatians that they initially welcomed him as an angel of God, perhaps a reference to the incident at Lystra recorded in Acts 14. But why did Paul raise the specter of an angel preaching an apostate gospel? If we identify the Galatian error with what Paul confronted at Colosse, then it may be assumed that the kind of angelic adulation that prevailed in that setting was also a part of the “higher spirituality” brought to Galatia by the anti-Pauline missionaries (cf. Col 2:16–18).

Paul’s opponents also may have cited the role of the angels in the deliverance of the law (Gal 3:19) to give a supernatural enhancement to their own proclamation of a law-observant gospel. In that case, Paul wanted to make clear that even if an angel, even such an exalted angel as Gabriel or Michael, were to preach a different gospel, the curse of God would be upon him. Early Christian preaching was aware of just such an angelic apostasy when the angels who rebelled with Satan “abandoned their own home” (Jude 6) for the chains of darkness and eventual condemnation on the day of judgment. Moreover, Paul was aware that Satan himself could masquerade as an angel of light. Indeed, by this cunning he had led astray many sincere believers from their pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:3–15).¹⁹

To be anathematized then means far more than to be excommunicated.³⁵²⁰ It means nothing less

17 Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 97.

18 ³³ *LW* 26.55.

19 Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 97–98.

20 ³⁵ Thus the rendering of the NEB, “Let him be outcast!” is far too weak to do justice to the gravity of Paul’s language. As R. Y. K. Fung (*Galatians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 47) observes: “it thus more likely means being delivered up and devoted to the judicial wrath of God.” Cf. C. Jordan’s colloquial rendering: “Now get this straight: Even if we or an angel fresh out of

than to suffer the eternal retribution and judgment of God. The GNB comes close to capturing the essence of Paul's tone in this passage, "Let him be condemned to hell!" We can gauge something of what this curse must have meant to Paul's readers by looking at a curse in one of the documents found among the Dead Sea Scrolls:

And the Levites shall curse all the men of the lot of Satan, saying: 'Be cursed because of all your guilty wickedness! May He deliver you up for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers! May He visit you with destruction by the hands of all the Wreakers of Revenge! Be cursed without mercy because of the darkness of your deeds! Be damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire! May God not heed when you call on him, nor pardon you by blotting out your sin! May he raise his angry face toward you for vengeance!' ³⁶²¹

On the Donatist controversy and its import, cf. J. Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 307–18.

let him be accursed. (ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.)

ἀνάθεμα (ἀνάθεμα || Noun: Neuter Nominative Singular). Cf. Romans 9:3; 1 Cor. 16:22. Note the imperative verb.

Precisely what Paul has in mind is hard to determine, but *may he be condemned to hell!* captures the intensity of the original phrase.²²

"It is thus the strongest possible form of condemnation." [Erdman, 35]

William Hendricksen paraphrases Galatians 1:8: "Even if we or a holy angel must be the object of God's righteous curse, were any of us to preach a gospel contrary to the one we humans previously preached to you, then all the more divine wrath must be poured out on those self-appointed nobodies who are now making themselves guilty of this crime."

Harsh? Do we care about the glory of Christ and the health of His church? Do we care about those that are on their way to hell? Do we care about truth?

Word is used of those who do not love Christ and false teachers. 1 Cor. 16:22.

heaven preaches to you any other message than the one we preached to you—to hell with him!" (Cotton Patch, 94).

36 1QS 2.5–17 in G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 63.

21 Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 98–99.

22 Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 14.

1:9 EXEGESIS

GREEK TEXT:

ὥς προειρήκαμεν καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω· εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

ὥς (ὥς = “as” || Adverbial Conjunction).

προειρήκαμεν (προειπον = to say before || Verb: Perfect Active Indicative, 1P). Paul uses the perfect tense here which refers to an act completed in past time having present results. This fact marks this statement not simply as a past fact, but one of which the results remain, doubtless, in that they remember or may be assumed to remember the warning which Paul had given them. This makes the defection of the Galatians all the more inexcusable. The plural number of the verb shows that the previous warning was given not merely by Paul but also by his associates, since the apostle uses the singular verb in the expression, “so say I now again.” [Wuest]

καὶ ἄρτι (ἄρτι = now || Adverb).

πάλιν (πάλιν = again || Adverb).

λέγω· (λέγω || Verb: Present Active Indicative, 1S).

εἴ τις (εἴ τις = if anyone). First Class Condition.

ὑμᾶς (συ || Second Person Independent Personal Pronoun: Accusative Plural).

εὐαγγελίζεται (εὐαγγελίζω || Verb: Present Middle Indicative, 3S).

παρ' ὃ (ὃς || Neuter Nominative Singular Relative Pronoun).

παρελάβετε, (παραλαμβάνω = to receive || Verb: Aorist Active Indicative, 2P).

ἀνάθεμα (ἀνάθεμα || Noun: Neuter Nominative Singular). Cf. Romans 9:3; 1 Cor. 16:22.

ἔστω. (εἶμι || Verb: Present Active Imperative, 3S).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

As I have said before, I now say again: if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

As I have said before, I now say again: (ὥς προειρήκαμεν καὶ ἄρτι πάλιν λέγω·)

When was the “before” (previous verse or visit?).

As we have said before refers to an earlier visit, not to the preceding clause in the text, since now (arti) is an adverb of time. The sense seems to be, “What I said at that time I am saying again now” From the start of his ministry among them, Paul had warned them of imminent gospel perversions. The gospel which you received refers to the once for all (aorist tense) preaching of the good news of grace in Christ which they had previously believed. [John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 17.]

The words said before are from prolego (προλεγο) which means “to say beforehand, to predict,” and here have the idea of “to say before” in the sense of saying something in times past, since it is used in contrast to the word now. The reference is not to verse 8 but to a previous time when

Paul made this same statement. The compound verb here and the words and now, point necessarily to an earlier time in contrast to the present. It was either said on a previous visit to the Galatian churches or in a letter. The word now, arti (ἀρτι) in the Greek, excludes any reference to the words just written down. This suggests an already existing danger, and also the fact that Paul had warned the Galatians against the Judaizers even before the latter had made their destructive inroads.²³

If Paul wrote from Ephesus, the interval would be not more than one year.

if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.
(εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεται παρ' ὃ παρελάβετε, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.)

εἴ τις (εἴ τις = if anyone). First Class Condition.

εὐαγγελίζεται (εὐαγγελίζω || Verb: Present Middle Indicative, 3S). Contrast to the subjunctive in v. 8. Verse 8 was hypothetical; this verse is actual.

*The one you accepted is literally “that which you received.” The word “received” contains the element of appropriating something for oneself. The good news had not merely been preached to the Galatians; they had not merely “heard” it (*JB*²⁴ Phps²⁵), but they had received it and made it their own. The Greek verb used in this context was a technical one in Judaism for “receiving a tradition.”²⁶*

Why did Paul repeat the apostolic curse introducing the second version with the words, “As we have already said, so now I say again”? It is possible that Paul was referring here to his utterance of the original anathema during his recent preaching mission in Galatia. Perhaps he anticipated the problems his opponents would bring and tried in this way to forewarn the Galatians against heeding their erroneous teaching (thus Schmithals, Ebeling, Longenecker). Most commentators, however, believe that Paul repeated the anathema in order to emphasize its severity and further impress upon the Galatians the utter folly of their flirtation with false doctrine (thus Bruce, Fung, Lightfoot). There is one important stylistic difference between vv. 8 and 9. Although the expression “Let him be eternally condemned!” is identical in both, the if-clauses are given in two different moods. In v. 8 the if-clause is followed by a subjunctive verb, “should preach,” because what is being contemplated is a highly improbable, though not impossible, situation. However, in v. 9 the if-clause is followed by the indicative mood, “is preaching,” indicating the ongoing crisis unfolding in Galatia even as Paul wrote. Also in v. 9 Paul reminds the Galatians that they had in fact embraced the true gospel when he had preached it to them. A solid foundation had been laid in the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas. Paul now reminds them, as later he would warn the Corinthians as well, that “no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:11).²⁷

23 Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Ga 1:9.

24 *JB* Jerusalem Bible

25 Phps Phillips

26 Daniel C. Arichea and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 15.

27 Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 99.

With Paul we boldly pronounce a curse upon every doctrine that does not agree with ours. We do not preach for the praise of men, or the favor of princes. We preach for the favor of God alone whose grace and mercy we proclaim. Whosoever teaches a gospel contrary to ours, or different from ours, let us be bold to say that he is sent of the devil. [Luther, Galatians]