

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 20, 2017 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

freedom
THE GRACE OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS “Another Gospel is Not The Gospel” *Galatians 1:1-10, Matthew 7:15-20*

In order to lay the groundwork for our study of the book/letter of Galatians, we need understand the understand how important this letter was to Paul and to the church... how important it was to these churches in Galatia to whom Paul was writing, and how important it was for the growth and spread of Christianity. Paul was dealing with the problem of false teachers, false religions, and a perversion and distortion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Paul wasn't the first to warn us with alarm of the dangers and reality of false teachers and false teaching. Jesus says the following in **Matthew 7:15-20**... notice it with me, ***“¹⁵Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”***

- 1. What analogy did Jesus make to false prophets and do you think this is a good analogy? Why? Explain.** *Jesus compared false prophets to a wolf in sheep clothing. That is they may look like a Christian, talk like a Christian, and their teaching may even sound some-what “Christian” but they are not at all, but rather are dangerous to the flock and the truth.*
- 2. How did Jesus say we could recognize them and what do you think He was talking about with this analogy? How do we do this (examine their fruit)?** *Jesus said that we could recognize them by their fruit, and that we should examine the fruit of their life and what they say. We must hold up what they say to the truth of God's Word. His Word become the truth inspector of what they say.*

Jesus gives us a warning about the coming of the cults. He states, ***“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you***

will recognize them.” What Jesus was warning was that false teachers will often (may) look, act, and sound like Christians. However, that is only in external appearance. One can parade as a true believer for a time, but eventually one’s words, actions, and especially one’s beliefs--their “fruit”--will give one away as a counterfeit.

The growth of false and heretical teaching in our day is really astounding. It is everywhere, but perhaps most disheartening is its presence in the church. I believe that this can be attributed to several factors, but primarily we must understand that, first and foremost, the rise of these false teachings and false groups is a fulfillment of the warning given by Jesus and the apostles.

2 Passages that Warn of the Rise of False Teaching and Religions:

1. **Matthew 24:23-26** – *“²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ ‘Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it.”* In this passage Jesus, Himself, warns us that as His return draws near, there will be an increase in false prophets who will ensnare many in their false teachings. This is a major reasons for the importance of Paul’s letter, Galatians. The letter was written to combat false teaching in these churches.
2. **2 Peter 2:1-3** – *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ² And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”* In 2 Peter 2:1-3, Peter warns us that false teachers will even arise from within the church.

THESE YOUR KNOWLEDGE: *The following is a list of ten different church movements or teachings/practices with in the “Christian” church today. Beside each one (in the box provided place an [F] if you believe it is “false teaching/doctrine” or based on “false teaching.” Place a [T] if you believe that for the most part it is based on the truth of Scripture and Biblically accurate. Place a [U] if you are unsure if it is false or truth. And place a [?] if you think it could go either way... in other words it may be based on some truth but could drift into error.*

1. **Universalism - Universalism** is a doctrine that teaches all people will be saved. The main argument for **universalism** is that a good and loving God would not condemn people to eternal torment in hell. Some universalists believe that after a certain cleansing period, God will free the inhabitants of hell and reconcile them to himself.
2. **Health, Wealth and Prosperity Gospel - Prosperity theology** (sometimes referred to as the **prosperity gospel**, the **health and wealth gospel**, or the **gospel of success**) ^[A] is a religious **belief** among some Christians, who hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of **God** for them, and that **faith**, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth. Prosperity theology views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, he will deliver security and prosperity. The doctrine emphasizes the importance of personal empowerment, propoign

that it is God's will for his people to be happy. The [atonement](#) (reconciliation with God) is interpreted to include the alleviation of sickness and poverty, which are viewed as [curses](#) to be broken by faith. This is believed to be achieved through donations of money, visualization, and positive confession.

- 3. **Progressive Christianity - Progressive Christianity** is a form of Christianity which is characterized by a willingness to question tradition, acceptance of human diversity, a strong emphasis on social justice and care for the poor and the oppressed, and environmental stewardship of the Earth.
- 4. **The Emmergent Church Movement - The emerging church** is a Christian movement of the late 20th and early 21st centuries that crosses a number of theological boundaries: participants are described as Protestant, post-Protestant, evangelical, post-evangelical, liberal, post-liberal, conservative, post-conservative, anabaptist, adventist, reformed, charismatic, neocharismatic, and post-charismatic (Proponents: Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, Brian MacLaren, Dan Pagitt, Tony Jones, Rob Bell)
- 5. **The Social Gospel** - Christian faith practiced as a call not just to personal conversion but to social reform. The **Social Gospel** was a Protestant movement that was most prominent in the early-20th-century United States and Canada. The movement applied [Christian ethics](#) to [social problems](#), especially issues of [social justice](#) such as economic inequality, poverty, alcoholism, crime, racial tensions, slums, unclean environment, child labor, inadequate labor unions, poor schools, and the danger of war.
- 6. **The Seeker Sensitive Church Movement - The Seeker Sensitive Movement** is also very similar to "The Emerging Church" (a very fitting name). The Emerging Church typically describes a broad **movement** that seeks to use culturally **sensitive** techniques and marketing principles in order reach the "un-churched" majority.
- 7. **The Free Grace Movement** - What's currently being called the Free Grace Movement is the view that everyone receives eternal life the moment they believe in the Lord's perfect once for all time sacrifice for our sins and accept Him as their personal Savior and Lord.
- 8. **Liberation Theology - Liberation theology** is an interpretation of Christian theology which emphasises a concern for the liberation of the oppressed. It is a movement in Christian theology, developed mainly by Latin American Roman Catholics, that emphasizes liberation from social, political, and economic oppression as an anticipation of ultimate salvation. Simply put, liberation theology is a movement that attempts to interpret Scripture through the plight of the poor. True followers of Jesus, according to liberation theology, must work toward a just society, bring about social and political change, and align themselves with the working class. Jesus, who was poor Himself, focused on the poor and downtrodden, and any legitimate church will give preference to those who have historically been marginalized or deprived of their rights. All church doctrine should grow out of the perspective of the poor. Defending the rights of the poor is seen as the central aspect of the gospel.
- 9. **Antinomianism** - The word *antinomianism* comes from two Greek words, *anti*, meaning "against"; and *nomos*, meaning "law." *Antinomianism* means "against the law." Theologically, antinomianism is the belief that there are no moral laws God expects Christians to obey. Antinomianism takes a biblical teaching to an unbiblical conclusion. The biblical teaching is that Christians are not required to observe the Old Testament Law as a means of salvation. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law ([Romans 10:4](#); [Galatians 3:23-25](#); [Ephesians 2:15](#)). The unbiblical conclusion is that there is no moral law God expects Christians to obey. The apostle Paul dealt with the issue of

antinomianism in Romans 6:1-2, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” The most frequent attack on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is that it encourages sin. People may wonder, “If I am saved by grace and all my sins are forgiven, why not sin all I want?” That thinking is not the result of true conversion because true conversion yields a greater desire to obey, not a lesser one. God’s desire—and our desire when we are regenerated by His Spirit—is that we strive not to sin. Out of gratitude for His grace and forgiveness, we want to please Him. God has given us His infinitely gracious gift in salvation through Jesus (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Our response is to consecrate our lives to Him out of love, worship, and gratitude for what He has done for us (Romans 12:1-2). Antinomianism is unbiblical in that it misapplies the meaning of God’s gracious favor.

- 10. **The Non-Denominational Church Movement** - Nondenominational (or non-denominational) churches are those which typically distance themselves from the confessionalism and/or creedalism of other Christian communities by calling themselves non-denominational. There is no identifiable standard among such congregations. Nondenominational church congregations may establish a functional denomination by means of mutual recognition of or accountability to other congregations and leaders with commonly held [doctrine](#), [policy](#), and [worship](#) without *formalizing* external direction or oversight in such matters. Some nondenominational churches explicitly reject the idea of a formalized denominational structure as a matter of principle, holding that each congregation is better off being [autonomous](#).

The coming and rising of false teachers and teachings should not be a surprise, nor catch us unaware and unprepared. Jesus and His disciples warned us of this, but that doesn’t mean that we should take them for granted and Paul certainly doesn’t. Paul doesn’t fiddle around with a lot of diplomacy and cordiality. Like a surgeon going after a tumor that needs to be removed, he cuts in immediately and declares his case right up front. As in no other letter, he jumps in with both feet. For only five verses does the apostle give his greeting... then he plunges in. His major thrust is clear and concise: “There is one, and only one, Gospel; any change results in a corruption of the truth.”

I. THE WRITER: AUTHORITY OF APOSTLESHIP DEFENDED (Galatians 1:1-5)

Placing his name at the front end of his opening sentence, Paul identifies himself as the author of the letter. He then immediately cites his qualifications for composing such a document.

2 Credentials that Give Paul’s Letter Weight:

1. **His calling (vv.1-2)** – Here is Paul’s greeting to open this letter in **verses 1 and 2**, *“¹Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), ² and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia.”* Paul identifies himself as **“an apostle.”** False teachers around Galatia were saying that Paul lacked apostolic qualifications, attempting to discredit his message and character. The first part of his letter (to the Galatians) was spend in defending his authority and apostolic qualifications. Parenthetically, he defended his role, *“... not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead.”*

2 Specific Qualifications for Apostleship: (Acts 1:12-25 [vv.21-22], Acts 9:3-10)

**It should be noted also that men of today cannot be apostle for these two reasons.*

- (1) **An apostle had to be specifically selected and called by Jesus, who gave him authority** – In Acts, chapter 1, following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples are given the task of selecting a new disciple/apostle to take the place of Jesus' betrayer, Judas. In Acts 1:12-26 this one is chosen, Matthias, but based on what qualification? Acts 1:21-22 tells us what qualified Matthias to become a disciple/apostle along with the others, ²¹ *“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”* Matthias met that qualification and was chosen to become one of the apostles. He had been with Jesus from the start, had sat under Jesus' teaching from the beginning, obviously had heard the call to follow Jesus and had followed him, had witnessed his life and work, as well as his resurrection. This gave him authority as an eye-witness of the reality of Jesus and made his words... his testimony powerful and binding.

Was Paul specifically selected and called by Jesus, and given authority in much the same way? Absolutely! Acts 9 give us the account. The resurrected Christ did appear to him and called him. Like it not, Paul had witnessed the life of Christ first hand also... first as a detractor and persecutor named Saul, and then as a dedicated follower named Paul.

- (2) **An apostle had to literally see the risen Christ, who authenticated his unique role and calling** – Did Paul literally see the risen Christ thus authenticating his unique calling as an apostle? Again both Acts 1:12-26 and Acts 9:3-10 gives us the credentials of both the early disciples/apostle of Christ, as well as Paul's. In Acts 1:22 we read, ²² *beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”* And from Paul's conversion experience we read these words in Acts 9:5, ⁵ *“And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’”* Paul would later speak of this experience as an eye-witness to the fact that Christ was risen from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:3-10, ³ *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”*

Now, why do you think it would be important for Paul to establish himself as an apostle and essentially begin this letter by defending his credentials? Because his credibility was being questioned by the Judiazers, but what could they possibly have to gain by attacking him personally? Doesn't it seem that they would only see the need to attack his message and teaching? Well, there is something to this. If you can destroy the messenger, you certainly destroy his message. Silencing the messenger, silences his message. Here are 4 reasons that these false teachers, the Judiazers, attacked Paul personally.

4 Reasons Paul's Person was Attacked:

- (1) **To cast doubt** – One seed of doubt cast into a situation can cloud the entire situation with doubt. This was certainly true in Paul's case. These false teacher that had infiltrated the church in the region of Galatia, and had cast doubt not only on Paul's teaching, but on Paul himself.
 - (2) **To construct discredit – If you can discredit the man you can discredit his message**
 - (3) **To disparage -**
 - (4) **To create discouragement -**
2. **His message (vv.3-5)** – ³ *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,* ⁴ *who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,* ⁵ *to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.* Two words, often the trademark of Paul's greetings, appear here; *"grace"* and *"peace."* Neither of these come to man through man, but only through God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. *"Grace"* is the reason for the good news in the first place... *"peace"* is the result of the Gospel in the human heart. However, in addition to these he notes three characteristics of the Christian's salvation which are worth observing (v.4).

3 Characters of the Believers Salvation:

- (1) **The price** – Paul speaks in **verse 4** of Jesus Christ as He... *"who gave Himself for our sins..."* Paul is telling us that the nature of Christ death was "sacrificial." This is a direct assault on the teaching of the "Judiazers" who said you and I must do something in order to be saved. Paul said no! The very heart of Christianity is that we don't have to do anything to be saved. Jesus Christ already did it. He gave Himself for us... for our sins.... to pay for our sins... to make us right.
- (2) **The purpose** – Paul not only give us the price, but he goes further and give us the purpose. Notice it in verse 4, (Jesus Christ)... *"⁴ who gave Himself for our sins (the price), that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."* Do you see it? The purpose for our salvation? That He might deliver us! The object of Christ's death on our behalf was our deliverance. Jesus paid it all to deliver us from death, and hell... from the world the flesh and the devil... from our sin. Paul says, *"... from this present evil age."* The word "age" there does not refer to period of time but an order or system, and in particular to the current world system ruled by Satan... the enemy. As John

said in 1 John 5:19, “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” Paul spoke to this in Ephesians 2:1-5, “¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” **Based on Paul’s words, what is the purpose the believes salvation?** Paul is laying the ground work here. This is at the heart of what the gospel is about, why it is so important, and why Paul wrote this letter to defend the truth of the gospel against those who were wanting water it down, change it, rewrite it, reinvent it, and promote a false gospel which Paul will later call “no gospel at all. “

- (3) **The plan** – Here it is again in verse 4, (Jesus Christ)... “⁴ who gave Himself for our sins (the price), that He might deliver us from this present evil age (the purpose), according to the will of our God and Father.” Paul said all this was done “... according to the will of our God and Father.” This suggests the origin of Christ’s death was rooted in the Father’s plan. It was all a part of His plan for our salvation. **READ: Luke 19:1-10** His plan was/is to save us. When Jesus spoke of his reason for coming he said in Luke 19:10, “¹⁰For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” And of course the most oft quoted verse in all of Christianity confirms this plan, John 3:16, “¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The Point: God has provided completely for man’s salvation, based fully on the finished work of His Son, Jesus Christ, at the cross. With apostolic authority Paul underscored this truth. It was not to be tampered with. To bring human achievement of any sort into that work is to bring corruption, weakness, and pollution to the Gospel. Any such addition is heresy or legalism.

II. THE GOSPEL: INTEGRITY OF THE GOSPEL AFFIRMED (Galatians 1:6-9)

1. **Desertion for a “Different” Gospel (v.6)** – Paul noticed the Galatians believers making a peculiar shift away from one Gospel to a false substitute. His reaction is summarized in the words “I am amazed.” He didn’t rebuke them... he merely expressed heavy surprise. As used, the term “deserting” means literally to transfer one’s allegiance. It was used of soldiers who effected from their army... of men who switched sides politically or philosophically. The Galatians traded allegiances, not over a long period of time, but “so quickly.” They had become vulnerable. Why? Because they were gullible... lacked discrimination/discernment. **<Very dangerous when Christians/believers are not grounded, sound Biblically, doctrinally grounded, discerning, don’t know why they believe and why.**

2. **Distortion of the True Gospel (v.7)** – Targeting the real problem, Paul wrote that they hadn't accepted just "another" gospel, but a distortion created by ones seeking to disturb and unsettle them. The term "disturb" suggests not only modification, but also reversal of fact... of truth.
3. **Reaction to the False Teachers (vv.8-9)** - In clear language Paul called down judgement from the living God upon anyone who preached a "contrary" (distorted) gospel. The judgement was so strong that it was repeated, "Let him be accursed" (v.8)... "let him be accursed (v.9). This was not an intemperate outburst of anger, but a deliberate... impartial... severe warning.

III. THE CONVICTION: NON-CONFORMITY OF THE CHRISTIAN UPHELD (Galatians 1:10)

This is expressed in two questions and one statement in verse 10, *"¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."* This conviction can be expressed by three summarizing statements that emerge from Paul's words here:

3 Summarizing Statement from Paul's Words:

1. **Those who seek to please God only, are invincible within –**
2. **Those who stop striving to please people are unintimidated without –**
3. **Those are the true servants of Christ who think and act independently –**

3 Things a Believer Should Do To Protect Against False Teaching, False Religions and Cult: Paul said in Ephesians 5:6-7, *"⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them."* In other words, we need to protect ourselves against the false teaching and doctrinal error, against errant "Christian" heresies of our day, against cults and false religions, but how do you really do that.

1. **Study and know the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15-16)**- First, we are called to study and know the Word of God... in other words, get grounded. Paul writes to Timothy and all saints in 2 Timothy 2:15-16 saying, *"¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."* Christians should master the Bible so that they will not be deceived by any false teaching.
2. **Be prepared to defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15-16)** - Second, Titus commands us to be able to confront and refute false teachers. Titus 2:1 says, *"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."* In other words, know why you believe what you believe and be able to speak it. Paul goes on to day in Titus 2:6-8, *"⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."* And then he adds, in the last verse of Titus 2... in Titus 2:15, *"¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."* Be able to defend your beliefs... again, in

order to do this we must be grounded in what we believe and in the Word of God. This doesn't mean that we take up arms and destroy those who are against us physically. It does mean that we know what we believe and can adequately and effectively state it and defend it when attacked. 1 Peter 3:15-16 reminds us, ¹⁵ *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;* ¹⁶ *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed."*

- 3. Protect the flock** - Finally, in Acts 20, in his touching farewell address to the leaders from the church at Ephesus, Paul exhorts the leaders of the church to protect their flock from the false teachers that will prey upon the sheep... believes in the church. Paul say in Acts 20:29-30, ²⁹ *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.* ³⁰ *Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."* Later Paul would challenge his young protégé in the ministry, Timothy, with these words in 2 Timothy 4:2-5, ² *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.* ³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;* ⁴ *and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.* ⁵ *But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."* In other words, protect the flock! I believe that every Christian is called to know the truth so well they can confront false teaching, and protect their church and family from it.