

HIS SIDE VERSUS OUR SIDE - OVERVIEW OF GALATIANS

Or, What is a TRUE Christian?

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CHAPTER 2

THE GOSPEL VERSUS "ANOTHER GOSPEL" - GALATIANS 1:6-8

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." -- Galatians 1:6-9

In these words the apostle establishes for all time the authority and validity, the finality and fixity of the Gospel he was called to preach, the Gospel that is handed down to us by inspiration, and preserved for us, in the sacred Scriptures.

So assured is Paul that he pronounces a curse upon those who proclaim any other gospel. This is not personal pique, spoken in a spirit of revenge upon those who were disturbing his converts in these churches of Galatia. No indeed. They were perverting the Gospel of CHRIST and thereby offering affront to GOD and to **"the grace of Christ."** He denounces them with the anathema of GOD. Let all stand in awe: GOD HIMSELF WILL SAFEGUARD HIS GOSPEL, SO DEARLY PURCHASED AT SO GREAT A PRICE - OF HIS OWN SON!

1. "Another -- Not Another"

These words do not make sense in our English translation, but they do in the Greek. Two different words are used. The first "another" is *HETEROS*, from which is derived our heterodox, meaning one of a different kind; the second is *ALLOS*, meaning in the same class, one within the same class; while *HETEROS* is but an imitation, not to be classed with the genuine. That is, these two while they appear much the same are antithetical; they are opposed to each other; they are on opposite sides.

For illustration, I take a silver dollar and place along with it a paper dollar. The latter is *ALLOS*, just as good as the silver dollar, since the United States government validates it, both are equal to 100 pennies. But I have in my possession *ANOTHER (HETEROS)* dollar; to the untrained eye it

looks just like the paper dollar, but it is *HETEROS*, only an imitation, a counterfeit of the genuine.

What is the idea of a counterfeit? Similarity without reality or validity. Since its purpose is to deceive it is made to appear just as much like the genuine as is possible. Thus the unwary will not detect the difference. This is Satan's method, as revealed in our Lord's parable of the tares: the darnel of the Orient is so similar to the wheat that in its earlier stages it is almost impossible to detect it, hence it passes for wheat.

Now, the counterfeit dollar illustrates the deficiency of the counterfeit gospel in these respects:

1. It is lacking in authority: man-made, not government authorized, it is under the ban, the anathema of the law; so is everyone who circulates it.
2. It is lacking in Quality: silver is the metal of redemption; in this the counterfeit gospel is like the dollar, deficient.
3. It is lacking in Utility: the genuine dollar is worth 100 cents; this one is worth nothing, will buy nothing (except through deceit), and is worse than useless - because attached to it is a criminal offense - a felony.

Folks, if you don't get anything else out of this study - get this!

Satan also ordains ministers!

What is the Genuine Gospel?

Paul is so confident he has the true Gospel -- a confidence we will trace to its source -- and so mercilessly denounces the false, it surely behooves us to become familiar with the earmarks of the genuine. As the bank clerk is trained to detect counterfeit money, so should we be skilled in recognizing the false gospel as against the law.

As we examine this antithetical Epistle, written to expose the false and expound the true, we will find three essential elements, and only three. We may readily relate them to the three persons in the Godhead. Lacking in any one of these essentials a gospel so-called is not the genuine Gospel of GOD. These essentials are: a supernatural person; a supernatural book; and a supernatural experience.

2. A Supernatural Person

It is "**the gospel of Christ**" (Galatians 1:7; Romans 1:16). There is only one CHRIST, the CHRIST of history; yes, and of prophecy. He has revealed Himself through certain immutable facts imbedded in the annals of the race. Through these facts all who will may know Him.

(1) *A supernatural birth*: "**made of a woman**" (Galatians 4:4; Genesis 3:15); a fact that alone explains His unique person. Luke's account of the nativity is the mother's own story given to the doctor, Doctor Luke. Who has the hardihood to contradict the mother, as though she did not

know?

(2) *A unique teaching:* "**All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth**" (Luke 4:22); "**Never man spake like this man**" (John 7:46). In all the learning of nineteen hundred years, especially the recent progress that has been rendered a ten-year-old textbook antiquated, nothing that Jesus ever taught has been outmoded. His teachings are the perennial fountain of human thought.

(3) *A spotless, sinless life.* Majestically Jesus lived His life, never apologizing for anything He did, never correcting Himself in any way. At its close He could issue the challenge: "**Which of you convinceth Me of sin?**" (John 8:46); and His judge twice declared, "**I find no fault in this man**" (Luke 23:4, 14). Jesus taught a new standard of life, and forthwith He Himself lived it. Wonderful! No one since His day has succeeded even in approaching it.

(4) *A supernatural death.* The one man who had no need to die, He purposefully set about to give up His life, saying, "**To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world**" (John 18:37; 12:27). Born to die; accomplishing His life's purpose through death (Hebrews 2:14). Onlookers at the cross saw deity revealed and cried, "**Truly this was the Son of God**" (Matthew 27:54).

(5) *A supernatural resurrection.* Cemeteries hold all their recruits in silence, save One. Men do not naturally rise from the dead, but Jesus said that He would (Matthew 16:21), and against all odds He did. "**Declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead**" (Romans 1:4). Without this fact, there would be no gospel, no Christianity. It would have failed.

(6) *A heavenly, age-long ministry.* He entered "**into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us**" (Hebrews 9:24). Thus entering, He sent the HOLY SPIRIT to carry on what He "**began both to do and teach**" (Acts 1:1), gathering unto CHRIST as the head of His mystical body, the Church. Meanwhile CHRIST is carrying on His saving work in heaven: "**Able also to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them**" (Hebrews 7:25).

(7) *A supernatural return,* the climatic revelation of Himself. "**For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works**" (Matthew 16:27). While still future, this event is treated as an assured fact, culminating the revealing of Himself to men.

These facts are unalterable. Imbedded in history, no one can root them out. Through them we know, believe on and appropriate the person and saving work of CHRIST, the first essential of the Gospel. (Note that two of these facts, the death and resurrection, are counted sufficient ground for faith unto salvation -- Romans 10:9).

3. A Supernatural Experience

Here we reach the real vitals of the Christian faith. The focal point of the Gospel is THE HEART-LIFE of the one who believes it. Does it solve the problem of human living -- or only

partly so, as the false gospel suggests? Does it beget a transforming experience? Does it meet human need?

GOD the Son has come, offering Himself as man's deliverer. GOD the Father has explained what He was accomplishing in and through the Son. Now GOD the HOLY SPIRIT has come -- see Galatians 4:6 -- to give to us an experience. It is to be an experience of the Person, in accordance with the terms, the promises and provisions of the Book.

This is chiefly Paul's argument in Galatians. He has experienced CHRIST: "**It pleased God ... to reveal His Son in me**" (1:15, 16); "**It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me**" (2:20). And he has deep anguish of soul over his Galatian converts because a false gospel is robbing them of a like experience: "**My little children, of whom I travail ... again until Christ be formed in you**" (4:19). In other words, Christian experience is meant to be, in a sense, by a similar operation of the HOLY SPIRIT, a re-incarnation of CHRIST. What a conception! How easily spoiled by any system not Christ-centered.

Moreover, the HOLY SPIRIT so unites us to CHRIST that Christian experience becomes a reproduction in us of the essential facts of CHRIST's threefold revelation.

- CHRIST died: WITH HIM we died (Colossians 2:20).
- CHRIST arose: WITH HIM we are risen (Colossians 3:1).
- CHRIST has appeared in heaven: WITH HIM our life is now hid in GOD (Colossians 3:1-3).
- CHRIST will appear again: WITH HIM we shall appear in glory (Colossians 3:4).

Again, the HOLY SPIRIT by indwelling us purposes to reproduce in us the very characteristics of CHRIST (Galatians 5:22, 23). Thus our identification with CHRIST is made complete, resulting in a Christ-likeness absolutely unattainable in any other way.

These are the essentials of the Gospel -- repeatedly called "**the gospel of God**" because it bears the imprint of GOD the Father, GOD the Son and GOD the HOLY SPIRIT. It has cost GOD much. He is very zealous for it. He will defend it against all man-handling. Any perversion of it calls forth His anathema - or curse.

Is such anathema too severe? No indeed. The souls of men are at stake. Any other gospel simply does not work. It leaves men on Our Side, wallowing in the trough of their own self-effort. Only the supernatural Gospel of GOD transfers us to His Side, there to experience Him in His delivering, transforming power.

Dear reader, which side does GOD see you on today?

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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