

The Necessity of Truth in Doctrine

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Introduction

No epistle in the New Testament begins more abruptly than the Galatian letter. No epistle is more frankly and plain-spokenly launched on its major course than the Galatian letter. No brethren in the first century are more directly and boldly reproved and called to account for their apostate direction than those of Galatia through this letter. The apostle writes correctively and rebukingly to the Corinthians, but he first devotes a few words of commendation to them (2 Cor. 1:4-9). Not so with the Galatians.¹ After the strongest words of affirmation of his apostolic credentials, followed by a brief greeting and doxology, Paul launches a frontal attack against the fickleness of the Galatians and against the source of their problem. The first major section of the epistle, following the introduction, provides the tempo and tenor for the letter as a whole. This section (Gal. 1:6-10) is the subject of the present study.

Exegesis of Galatians 1:6-10

Verse 6:

I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel;

Unable to repress or mitigate his concern over their impending apostasy, Paul says, “I marvel” concerning it. This word signifies wonder, amazement, and surprise, but lurking beneath its meaning is the implication of sorrow, disappointment, and perhaps even a measure of anger. That which so surprised and disappointed Paul was two-fold. First, Paul was amazed that they could so radically change their convictions. Second, he was amazed that they could so rapidly apostatize. *Metatithesthe* is a present tense form in the middle voice with the sense of “ye are removing yourselves.” This indicates that the apostasy was not full-blown or complete. They were still in the process of defection and Paul wavered “... between fear and hope as to the outcome.”² Had the apostasy been perfected, the perfect tense would have been employed. This verb form also indicates that they were under no threat, compulsion, or coercion to so apostatize, but they were deliberately doing this to themselves. They could not blame their defection on others, not even the false teachers they were following — they were personally responsible.

The meaning of *metatithesthe* itself is noteworthy. The term means essentially to transpose. It is employed by the classical Greek authors to refer to desertion and revolt, politically or militarily. There is a shade of the traitor or turncoat in its meaning. “The verb is

just that which would be used to describe a political revolution in its earlier stages, when there is serious risk of allegiance being transferred from one government to another.”³

The rapidity of the change of conviction in the Galatians is indicated by the phrase, *so quickly*. Some understand *quickly* to relate to the time of their conversion and others relate it to Paul’s last visit among them (thus helping to date the epistle).⁴ The third, and, I believe, correct view understands the term to be used positively, rather than relatively. Thus, Paul is expressing amazement that so rashly, readily, and recklessly after a new teaching has been introduced, they are already taking it up. “How could they who had received Paul as an ‘angel of God’ (Gal. 4:14), whose acceptance of the Gospel had been so enthusiastic, now so suddenly transfer their affections to its opposite,” seems to be the thought.

A passing reference to the fickleness of the Galatian temperament is appropriate. The major commentators all remark on this dominant trait of the Gauls. Lightfoot expressed it well:

Fickleness is the term used to express their temperament. This instability of character was the great difficulty against which Caesar had to contend in his dealings with Gaul. He complains that they all with scarcely an exception are impelled by the desire for change... The hearty zeal with which they embraced the apostle’s teaching followed by their rapid apostasy is only an instance out of many of the reckless facility with which they adopted and discarded one religious system after another.⁵

Although Paul had seen his share of those who could be easily swayed with “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14), he exclaims over the Galatian defection, “I’ve never seen anything like it in my life!”

They were swiftly moving to their new doctrines “from him that called you in the grace of Christ.” The Galatians were called of God through Paul’s Gospel as the Thessalonians were (2 The. 2:13–14). God is consistently stated to be the One who calls men out of the world into the church (cf. Rom. 8:30; 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:9; Gal. 1:15, et al.). “Their defection was all the more sinful, as the calling was from God.”⁶ *In the grace of Christ* is a prepositional phrase modifying the call of God. The ASV correctly reads “in” rather than “into” (KJV) for *en*. It may be either locative (expressing the location or sphere of the call) or instrumental (expressing the means of the call). Respected expositors may be found contending for both, and both contentions convey scriptural concepts. Perhaps Paul is in this early passage of the letter identifying the great distinguishing trait of the “different Gospel” for which they were falling—that in which they were called by the false teachers was in Law alone, marked by ritualistic works of a dead and defunct system. Thus, the grace of Christ in which they were called would be automatically surrendered if they sought to be justified by the Law (Gal. 5:4).

Their calling and standing in the grace of Christ was being surrendered and exchanged for a “different Gospel.” *Different* is *heteron*, indicating distinction of kind and implying the negation of resemblance between the “different Gospel” and the “Gospel of Christ” (v. 7), that is., the true Gospel. Thus, they were removing not merely to “another Gospel” (KJV), but to “a (pretended) Gospel of a different kind (from mine), that is, false.”⁷

Verse 7:

Which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ,

Lest his reference to a “different Gospel” be possibly understood as a concession that the false Gospel they were embracing was in some sense an alternative means of redemption, he immediately adds, “which is not another Gospel.” *Another* is from *allo*, meaning “additional” or “besides.” It is unfortunate that the KJV obscures Paul’s play on the words *heteron* and *allo* by rendering them with the same word, *another*. By use of these two words, it is clear that Paul uses *Gospel* accommodatively with *heteron* (as the false teachers were wont to so dignify their heresy), but he uses it in its literal, accepted sense with *allo*.

Heteros denotes qualitative difference, *allos*, numerical difference...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.⁸

With biting sarcasm and great plainness of words Paul thus debunks the spurious doctrines that had captured their fancy. A parallel usage of *heteros* and *allos* in contrast may be found in 2 Corinthians 11:4.

The only sense in which the new message among the Galatians was “gospel” was in a perverted sense. The literal reading of the negative phrase, rendered *only* in the ASV is “‘except,” that is, “‘Except in this sense,’ in that it is an attempt to pervert the one true Gospel.”⁹ The false teachers were a source of “trouble” to the brethren. *Trouble* is a present participle indicating that the factionists were still among the Galatians when Paul wrote. The word here is the same used by Luke to describe the disturbance caused by the rabble-rousers in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5, 8). Paul refers to the troublers with the indefinite pronoun, *some*. Such an oblique reference may mean that he was not aware of the personal identities of them, or it may indicate that he simply did not want to give them unnecessary notoriety by naming them. In either case Paul did not neglect to name them because it would have been unkind to do so or because he was too timid to do so. He shrank not from naming enemies of the Gospel on many other occasions (cf. Gal. 2:11; 1 Tim. 1:19–20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16–17; 4:10, 14, et al.). He commanded faithful saints everywhere to do the same (Rom. 16:17–18). My judgment is that Paul did not know the names of these men, or he would have named them.

These troublers were perverting the Gospel of Christ. Perverting the Gospel was not merely the effect of their work; it was their desire and aim. The root of *thelontes* ("would") means first to "be resolved or determined, to purpose" then "to desire, to wish."¹⁰ These were not ignorant men, innocently preaching untruths (as was true of Apollos, (Acts 18:24–28), but men who knew better and deliberately preached error for the sake of racial, traditional, and party loyalties. *Pervert* refers to reversing, converting into the opposite. If these teachers were followed by the Galatians, they would be led into a doctrinal system just opposite to the true Gospel. The true Gospel they had heard pertained to the Spirit; the perverted "Gospel" to the flesh (Gal. 3:3). The true Gospel was characterized by the "grace of Christ" (1:6); the perverted "gospel" by the "works of the law" (3:2). They were not merely being drawn to a modified or weakened "gospel" but to one that was the direct opposite of the Gospel. On such a mission these false teachers had deliberately set out, and Paul strips their motive bare in this verse.

Verse 8:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.

To further emphasize the essentiality of maintaining the absolute purity of the Gospel Paul now proposes an inconceivable hypothesis composed of two equally improbable elements. He introduces these two elements with the strong adversative condition, literally, *but even though*, having the significance of "granting that the impossible might occur." The first improbability is that "we" should preach a different Gospel. Some believe Paul may have been using a literary plural,¹¹ but most understand Paul to refer to himself and his faithful associates in this pronoun.¹² The second (and even stronger) improbability is that "an angel from Heaven" should preach a different Gospel. No fallen angel who might rejoice in a damning doctrine is here suggested, but a messenger directly from the presence of God, for so *from Heaven* requires. How could Paul have more forcefully emphasized the immutability of the Gospel, than to declare that neither its foremost spokesman on earth nor a direct messenger from Heaven could alter it without condemnation?

Paul and his companions faithfully preached the Gospel truth unto the Galatians on at least two visits before this epistle. Those who would preach to them a message which goes beyond or is contrary to (ASV margin) the Gospel first preached among them were not God's servants, but his enemies. They were therefore "anathema," literally "devoted to destruction."

Verse 9:

As we have said before so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.

Because this verse reads so similarly to verse 8 and refers to a previous warning of the same kind, it is generally assumed by the English reader that it is but repetition for the sake of emphasis. Several expositors so take it.¹³ However, there are two factors indicating that Paul is not referring to verse 8 as that which was “said before.”

- The compound verb here (i.e., “have said before” —DM) and the words *and now*, point necessarily to an earlier time in contrast to the present. . . The word *now*, *arti* 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.¹⁴
- His change of pronouns so indicates. He reminds the Galatians that “we” (Paul and his associates) had previously warned them of just such teachers and doctrines, but now, by his own apostolic authority, he personally reminds them (“so say I now again”). “The previous warning was uttered by the apostle and his fellow-laborers, but the following sentence is based on his sole apostolical authority.”¹⁵

Because of the earlier warnings of apostate teachers these Galatians had received, their defection was even more inexcusable. Little wonder Paul was amazed and aghast at their apostasy.

These Galatians had not only had the Gospel faithfully preached to them, but they had also hospitably and warmly embraced that faithful word (for so *parelabete* connotes). Now they were welcoming and embracing a contrary message. The condemnation of verse 8 is again assigned to the teachers of the pseudo-Gospel. Although on the surface, verses 8 and 9 appear to be (and for the most part, are) parallel, it is noteworthy that while verse 8 suggests a hypothesis that is inconceivable, verse 9 describes what was occurring.

The strong wording of this entire passage forms a solemn warning against the sin of corrupting the gospel. All offices, appearances and reputations to the contrary, who-so perverts the divine truth is an enemy to Christ, and rests under the curse of God.¹⁶

There may elsewhere in the New Testament be warnings of tampering with Holy Writ that approach the severity of Paul’s warning here, but surely none surpass it.

Verse 10:

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

The question had apparently been raised by the Judaizers in Galatia as to Paul's consistency and sincerity and he answers such a baseless accusation vehemently: "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men?" Some of the same sort of teachers in Corinth had charged Paul with being over-mild when in their presence, but over-bold when writing to them from afar (2 Cor. 10:1-11). Some argue that by use of the reference to present time and behavior ("now") Paul is admitting that before he was converted, he lived to please and conciliate men rather than God, but since his conversion he has sought to please God by serving Christ alone.¹⁷ However, such is not consistent with Paul's own assessment of his motivations even as a persecutor and blasphemer. He did it "ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13), not purposely seeking human favor over Divine. He was in those earlier days "zealous of God" (Acts 22:3) even as he was when he wrote.

It may be that Paul is even actually quoting some of the false teachers among the Galatians in the phrases, *seeking the favor of men* and *striving to please men*.¹⁸ They had perhaps distorted Paul's earnest attempt to "become all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Perhaps they pointed to the circumcision of Timothy as an effort to curry Jewish favor, while preaching to the Gentiles that obedience to Moses' law was not necessary for salvation. Whatever specifically prompted the two rhetorical questions, they powerfully call attention to Paul's undivided allegiance to Christ. The apostle is emphasizing that one who is trying at all costs to please and serve men would never make such statements as he had just written, assigning all Gospel-perverters to the anathema of God. Indeed, such strong statements would doubtless displease and offend some, especially the false teachers and their disciples. In this way Paul both disproves and denies the accusations.

Let it be noticed Paul is not denying that he cares anything at all for the gracious thoughts or evaluations of his fellowmen. Paul was human and all human beings naturally desire praise rather than censure. He is emphasizing the true principle that loyal service to God will sometimes, if not often, bring reproach from men, even friends, relatives, and brethren. The true servant of Christ will not draw back from serving Christ to obtain the plaudits of men or to avoid their attacks. "This is a cutting reproof of all those ministers, who either alter or conceal the doctrines of the Gospel, for fear of displeasing their hearers, or to gain popularity."¹⁹ If his denial here were not enough, he points to the fullest demonstration of whose servant he truly was in Galatians 6:17: "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the

marks of Jesus.” Who could rationally argue with the long scars of the rods and the scourge across his back? Who could debate with the disfigurements left by the stoning at Lystra? Were these incurred to increase his power and popularity among men? Oh yes, the apostle cared for the cordial friendship of saint and sinner, Jew, and Gentile, but he would never compromise principle or practice to court it.

In the statement of this principle of loyalty to Christ at all costs, Paul forever exposes the weak and shallow disciple who will not even be inconvenienced, much less suffer, for Christ’s sake. More so, Paul’s statement and example heap a mass of rebuke and exposure upon the hireling time-servers in pulpits who are more proficient at licking boots and playing religious politics than they are at preaching the Gospel fully and faithfully. To maintain popularity (and position, often with a most generous salary) some have made an art of preaching only on things calculated to please the weakest saint. Such know just how to preach enough against “sin” in general without ever being specific enough to cause anyone to feel guilt. They have learned the science of being non-committal on controversial and unpopular topics. They have learned how to preach some truth without preaching any blatant error, but you will hear little or nothing from them that would distinguish them from the denominational preacher down the street. Were Paul resurrected among us he would not last two weeks in their pulpits and these soft preachers would be the first to prate against his uncouth, harsh, negative, and offensive words. A true servant of Christ such as Paul is blind and deaf to what men may say, do, or think when truth and righteousness are at stake. Christ must be pleased and served at whatever cost!

The Exclusiveness and Inclusiveness of the Gospel of Christ

When Paul begins his rebuke of the progressing apostasy of the Galatians, he describes them as having been called “in the grace of Christ” and now removing “unto a different gospel” (v.6). This language establishes the fact of an intimate, harmonious relationship, if not a parallel, between the “grace of Christ” and the “Gospel of Christ.” The mandatory conclusion from Paul’s statement is that to remove themselves from the true Gospel equaled removing themselves likewise from the grace of Christ. Who among all the residents of the vast area of Galatia were recipients of such grace? Were all Galatians its recipients or were some excluded? Some were excluded, for this epistle is addressed only to the “churches of Galatia” (v. 2), who alone are said to be “in the grace of Christ” (v. 6). All who had not been added to the churches of Galatia were therefore excluded from this glorious grace, because only those who had been

so added were included in it. The Gospel of God's grace is both exclusive and inclusive. It knows nothing of the pitiful attempts of unprincipled men who would promote a "Gospel" of universal salvation.

Since the grace of Christ is exclusive and inclusive in its very nature, it is therefore conditional. Some thing or things set the Galatians (who were in the churches and under grace) apart from all others. How had these Galatians been so constituted? The key is in the Gospel from which they were speedily moving. If to remove from the true Gospel was to remove from the grace, then it follows that to enter into and remain in the Gospel (by obeying its teachings) was to enter into and abide in the grace. Thus, the Gospel is described as "the word of his grace" (Acts 14:3; 20:32) and "the Gospel of the grace of God" (20:24). The Gospel is God's agent for delivering his saving grace to men as they obey it. It is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The grace of God has made its appearance on earth, bringing salvation to men, and instructing men (Tit. 2:11, 12). That agent of salvation and instruction is the Gospel which the Galatians were abandoning. The Gospel is the message by which God calls men to himself and into the grace and salvation of Christ (2 The. 2:13-14).

The salvation of the grace of Christ through the Gospel of Christ is granted only upon obedience to the Gospel. Christ is the author of salvation unto them that obey him (Heb. 5:9). Those who obey not the Gospel will be forever lost (2 The. 1:8). Those—and only those—who were in the Galatian churches and were partakers of grace had heard and obeyed the Gospel. Those who were lost, bereft of grace and outside of the church on the day of Pentecost were told how to correct this miserable condition. Upon hearing the Gospel preached, they believed its evidence and confessed their faith in the plaintive cry, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They were commanded to repent and be baptized in order to receive remission of their sins (v.38). When they did so the Lord added them to His church because they were saved or in a state of grace (vv. 41, 47). The daily adding done by the Lord (which began at Pentecost) establishes that, from this beginning to the end of time, He continues to add men to His church upon obedience to these same Gospel commands. Thus, we are not surprised that Paul reminded the Galatians that the time of their passage from being outside of Christ and His grace to entering into Him was when they accomplished their Gospel obedience in baptism (Gal. 3:27). Only those who had been baptized into Christ had received His grace and had been added to His church. All others were (and are) excluded by their own rejection or negligence toward the

Gospel. John Calvin's monstrous doctrines of unconditional election, perseverance of the saints and irresistible grace are at the same time foreseen and devastated by inspiration in the simple statement of Galatians 1:6. No man can receive the grace of God without obeying the Gospel. Men who have heard the Gospel of grace may, and often do, resist it to their own eternal ruin. Men who have received that grace may and do forfeit it by departing from the Gospel.

Current Applications

That the religious world that claims to believe in Christ in this modern age falls under the curse of Galatians 1:6-10 is beyond debate. The pronounced fickleness of the Galatians in matters of doctrine and morals appears to be a universal affliction. Only a few generations after the perfection of Eden, man had removed so far from God's will that he was not worth preserving. Not many generations after the ark's righteous inhabitants made a fresh start the human race had again become so corrupt that God called Abram aside and promised through him and his eventual seed that His plan for relieving men of the curse of sin would be accomplished. Although God gave the family of Abraham, through Jacob, incomparable blessings, and a written law for the first time, their history is one of repeated, almost perpetual, apostasy. "When the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4), that mankind-blessing seed of Abraham (3:16), and He established His church by the preaching of the Gospel of His atoning blood.

Although the safeguard of inspiration of the apostles and prophets protected first the preached and then the written message of the Gospel from error, it is evident in the very teachings of that message that men would not long be content with it. Many of the Jewish converts could not accept Gentiles without binding parts of the Mosaic law upon them (the Galatian problem). Some had erred from the Truth on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Tim. 2:16-18), some on the second coming of Christ (2 The. 2:1-3) and others on matters of morals (1 Cor. 5:6; 6:9-11). Warnings of doctrinal error and proponents of same are scattered generously through the New Testament, appearing in almost every book thereof.

Uninspired church history is rife with accounts of men's departures from the Way until the full-grown apostasy produced a religious monstrosity in Roman Catholicism that was unrecognizable as the church when compared with the New Testament. The abuses and errors became so egregious that some from within its own ranks arose in rebellion, producing the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Within two centuries the Reformation had so badly

failed to bring man back to Christ and the Truth that men arose within it, proclaiming the principle of restoration, rather than reformation. By the mid-19th century, the restored church could claim 300,000 members or more in our sparsely populated and undeveloped republic. Just when it would appear that perhaps a nation-wide restoration might become a reality, the demand by some for more than the Gospel allowed, and for less than the Gospel required by others, carried many churches and brethren once more into apostasy. Surely, this thumbnail sketch of man's religious history amply demonstrates man's universal proclivity to depart from truth and righteousness, as seen in the Galatians.

Not only does man speedily embrace false ways, there are always those who seem ever ready to serve as the devil's agents to lead others away from the Truth. Jesus warned of false prophets (Mat. 7:15) and of the blind who lead the blind to destruction (15:14). Some will lead others astray for gain (2 Tim. 6:1-5). Others (such as the false teachers in Galatia) did their work in order to uphold tradition and justify blind prejudice. Whatever the motive, those who tinker with the authoritative Truth of God are troublers of the innocent, and they turn the Truth into a message of errors by their perversions of it. That portion of the world that claims to believe in Christ is now hopelessly divided because men have departed from the Gospel in so many ways and for so long that the most essential facts of the Faith are now openly denied as important among them.

Paul's judgment upon false teachers, whether human or angelic, applies without regard to office, wealth, prominence, popularity, power, or influence. In order for some measure of credibility to be lent to their claims, some false teachers have claimed an angelic revelation (e.g., Joseph Smith and Mormonism). Such a claim is rendered false by Paul's censure of verse 8. Even if an apostle should try to lead some astray (as Peter once did, Gal. 2:11), he too would be accursed. He who would wrest the Scriptures does so to his own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16). Surely, Paul's two-fold prescription applies to many men today, including the following:

1. Those who make Mark 16:16 read, "He that believeth is saved and may be baptized."
2. Those who revel in the denominational concept of the church.
3. Those who substitute sprinkling and pouring for baptism.
4. Those who teach the doctrines of John Calvin.
5. Those who profess to believe in the availability of miraculous powers since the New Testament era.
6. Men likewise advocate many other such doctrines that are equally destructive to the Gospel.

Sadly, the Gospel perverters have become a major affliction in the body of Christ once more. By the middle part of the twentieth century, the Lord's people had largely made up the losses sustained by the defection of the previous century and had again become the fastest growing religious body in America. Man's fickleness began to be observed once more, however. The cry began to be noised abroad, "We've been too harsh." "We've overemphasized doctrine." "We've been too negative." The very distinctive militancy that had been so much responsible for rapid, yet stable growth, began to disappear. I well know what a temptation toward positivism this siren call was in the early to mid-1960s, for I was a young and inexperienced preacher to whom these things sounded plausible and about which I was made to feel considerable guilt until I figured out what was happening.

However, the more this fixation on "super salesmanship" and positivism became apparent among us and the less the cutting edge of the plainly worded Gospel Truth began to ring from our pulpits and papers, the less we began to grow. We entered an era in which it almost became a sin to expose sin and, at whatever cost to Truth, none in the pew must ever be offended or left with a feeling of guilt. In a 20-year span we went from a point where almost every Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian knew what we stood for (and hated us for it) to a point where they can see little, if any, difference between us and them. The things some of them were doing during the 1960s, and we were exposing (building gymnasiums, specialization of "ministries," giving incentive prizes for attendance, et al.) many of our brethren are either now doing or see nothing wrong with. None can deny that the church changed during the last 30 years of the twentieth century and is yet in a state of rapid flux. Why is this so? There is only one way the church can change or be changed: The **message** has changed, and a "different gospel" is being preached. True, this changed message is attracting some because it provides an air of emotional excitement, an aura of self-assurance and well-being (even for the grossly sinful) and a social-physical program that's the envy of the Salvation Army and YMCA in some cases. But is this God-given or humanly contrived growth? A swelling church and a growing church may well be and usually are separate entities. If great numbers of people are evidence of God's blessing, then the huge Independent Baptist churches such as those at Hammond, IN and Lynchburg, VA can present a more credible case for pleasing God than can any of us, for either of them is several times larger than our largest congregation.

The problem with the "growth at any price" practice is that the price is always too high. We must never forget that whatever we do to attract people is what we must continue to do to

keep them. If people are attracted by a wholly positive message, they'll become distraught to the point of leaving when the negative aspects of the Gospel must be emphasized. If they are fed with and attracted to a wholesome balance of all elements of the Gospel from the beginning, they will be happy with nothing less and the church will experience true growth therefrom. This was the basis of growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Although none of our congregations were as large then as several now are, I dare say that the church was stronger—far stronger. Men and women and even children knew what they believed and why they believed it.

By contrast, so many who have become members of the church in recent years, especially among the larger, rapidly swelling congregations, have become such with hardly the vaguest idea of who or what they are religiously. Many of them have been dunked in water after some 15-to-20-minute quickie “conversion” tactic was sprung on them. As more and more of those who are not grounded in the faith become elders, deacons, teachers, and preachers, more and more congregations must inevitably drift further and further from the truth. Just as inevitably, somewhere in the not-too-distant future a parting of the ways must come between those who have reveled in the changed message and its fruits and those who are determined that no man or angel will ever make them swallow a perverted Gospel. History need not repeat itself, but it probably will in this respect, as sad as it is to contemplate.

Conclusion

What shall we do about these matters? We must first remember Whose servants we are and Whose pleasure we seek. We serve not men, but Christ (Gal. 1:10). We must also never forget that faithful and loyal service to Christ can be measured only by our careful handling of His pure Word. To reject His Word is to reject Him and bring Judgment on ourselves by that very word (John 12:48). Therefore, to faithfully handle His Word is to faithfully serve Him (2 Tim. 2:15). Further, we must never allow the pressures of men to silence the Truth, be they gangsters, civil courts, relatives, dear friends, respected elders, or fellow preachers. We must remember that the very curse of God rests upon all who dare tamper with his Word, and we must determine to represent it loyally in our words and deeds wherever we go. In such a course alone is there hope both for us and for those who hear us (1 Tim. 4:16).

Endnotes

1. For additional discussion of this unique character of the letter, cf. J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Lynn, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., Inc., 1981), p. 64.

2. Kenneth S. Weust, *Galatians in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1956), p. 35.
3. F.C. Cook, ed., *The Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), vol. IX, p. 493.
4. For a fuller discussion of these time relational views and why they are untenable, cf. John Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), vol. I, pp. 19–20.
5. Lightfoot, p. 15.
6. Eadie, p. 21.
7. J.R. Dummelow, ed., *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* by various writers (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1943), p. 947.
8. Wuest, p. 37.
9. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1931), vol. IV, p. 277.
10. Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York, NY: American Book Co., 1889), pp. 285–286.
11. Robertson, p. 277.
12. Lightfoot. (p. 27) questions whether Paul ever uses the literary plural solely in reference to himself. (cf. also Cook, p. 494; Eadie, p. 25; Wuest, p. 39: et al.).
13. Eadie, p. 28, gives a list of some who view it thusly.
14. Wuest, pp. 40–41. (cf. Eadie, p. 28; Lightfoot, p. 78; Cook: p. 494–495, et al.).
15. Eadie, p. 28.
16. J.W. McGarvey and P.Y. Pendleton, *The Standard Bible Commentary* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Pub. Co., 1916), p. 252.
17. Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament – II Corinthians and Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 293–294.
18. For an interesting discussion of this hypotheses, cf. William B. Ramsay, *Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 266–267.
19. James Macknight, *Apostolical Epistles With a Commentary and Notes* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954), p. 283.

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