

BOOK OF GALATIANS

"In Less Than Five Years"

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 1:6-9

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) Read today's Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 7.** We are in an expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. This is message #3. I have titled today's message *"In Less Than Five Years."* Today let's look at verses 6 through 9 of chapter one.
-) **SLIDE 8.** Paul's first missionary journey took him through the area of Galatia and the four cities of Iconium, Antioch, Lystra, and Derbe. Most theologians agree that this first missionary journey occurred around the year 47AD. Most theologians also agree that this letter from Paul to the churches in Galatia was written shortly after the Jerusalem Council which was in 49AD.
-) So, let's make a few intelligent conclusions here. I believe, as do most theologians, that it is safe to say that the Book of GALATIANS was written no more than 5 years after Paul's initial visit to these churches. What can possibly go wrong in less than 5 years? That's is exactly what we will look at today.
-) Last week in our study of GALATIANS, we ended on a very positive and encouraging note. The apostle Paul wanted to remind the believers at these churches of God's promise of grace and peace. Very uplifting. Very inspirational. And that promise deserves the praise of the people.
-) But then immediately after that amicable salutation, he wastes no time addressing these people with an extremely severe warning in verses 6 through 9. Wait! What? I'll ask again. What can possibly go wrong in less than 5 years?

-) **SLIDE 9.** That answer is found in verse six. The Galatians were deserting a salvation based on **GRACE** for a different gospel. Let's look at all the implications of their actions.
-) **SLIDE 10.** There are no different gospels. There is only **ONE** gospel. The word "gospel" comes from the Greek word euangelion (u-on-gel-e-on) which means good news. And what Paul wants the Galatians to understand is that there is only one source of good news which means there is only one gospel.
-) Now, one thing we must remember is that these people in these churches were Jews. And what did a good Jew know? The Mosaic Law. Their entire lifestyles were based upon the Mosaic Law and what they were taught by their leaders.
-) **SLIDE 11.** And what was happening in these churches was that they were being infiltrated by false teachers who were disturbing the people by **DISTORTING** the gospel. These false teachers were turning them away from a salvation through grace and back into Judaism and a salvation based on works.
-) And what we must realize here is that this desertion of the gospel is happening in less than five years when Paul first introduced the life-saving gospel to these people in Galatia. And Paul is adamant in saying this can't be. This can't be! Works will never save you. Another gospel will never save you. And we'll see more of that as this Book unfolds.
-) But then he writes something in verses 8 and 9 that are so critical and crucial to Christian doctrine, Christian preaching, and Christian teaching. He writes this:
-) **SLIDE 12.** *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"*

-) Do we truly realize the implications of these two verses (which may I remind you are inspired by the Holy Spirit for Paul to write)? That if any kind of teaching other than the gospel that Paul proclaimed is taught by anyone at any place at any time, let that person be accursed.
-) Folks, that's about as serious as it gets. If the way of salvation is proclaimed and is anything other than solely by the grace of God through Jesus Christ and faith in Him alone, then that person be accursed.
-) **SLIDE 13.** The word "*accursed*" used here in the NASB and other translations is the Greek work "*anathema*" which means accursed, eternally condemned, cursed by God, damned. And you will probably see one of these terms written in your Bible.
-) I like that word "*anathema*." It reminds me of the words "*filthy lucre*" used by the KJV. You know, sometimes you just need to whip a little KJV on people.
-) Just how serious is that? I think its very straight forward to understand. If anyone ever tells another person that the way of salvation includes a different savior, or must include works of any kind, or suggests a different path to God, anything which distorts the true gospel of Jesus Christ as written in this Word, then that person is anathema. Eternally condemned. Cursed by God. Now, you tell me. How serious is that?
-) **SLIDE 14.** This issue is so important that Paul has to repeat it. He writes the same thing in verse 8 as he writes in verse 9.
-) **SLIDE 15.** It condemns a person to **BELIEVE** a different gospel and it equally condemns a person for **TEACHING** a different gospel (if there is such a thing as a different gospel).
-) **SLIDE 16.** And that is why James writes in the Book of JAMES 3:1 this: "*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.*"

-) **SLIDE 17.** Again, just how serious is this? Jesus tells us the fate of the person who follows a false teacher when He says this: *“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”*
-) So, you want to be a teacher or preacher of the Word of God? You better get it right! You want to fulfill the Great Commission and share the gospel with others? You better get it right! How about this? Do you trust the person teaching you? You better get that right too. Why? Because there are eternally damning consequences for those who do not take heed of Paul’s warning about false teachers who distort the gospel of grace.
-) There are approximately 1.7 billion Catholics in the world today. That is about 1 out of every 4 people. Does every person claiming Catholicism as their faith believe every single doctrine instituted by the Catholic Church? Probably not.
-) But let me share with you some Catholic doctrine as determined by the Council of Trent in 1545-1563. This doctrine continues to remain in effect today because Catholic dogma cannot change. Why? Because, to them, Catholic dogma is by divine revelation from God. And we all know God cannot change His mind, now can He?
-) Now before I conclude this morning with these three doctrinal statements of Catholicism, may I remind you that the Council of Trent was a direct response to Martin Luther’s rebellion and defection from the Catholic faith which resulted in the origin of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestants were saying this, and the Catholics responded by saying this.
-) **SLIDE 18.** Canon 9. *“If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.”*

-) What this statement is telling us is that if you believe you are saved by faith alone (which was the cry of the Reformation), then you are (here's that word) anathema. The Catholic Church pronounces an eternal condemnation on those of us who believe sola fide. They are condemning what Paul is writing here in the Book of GALATIANS. Let that sink in.
-) **SLIDE 19.** Canon 11. *“If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema.”*
-) What this statement is telling us is that if you believe you are saved because it is the good will of God that you are, then you are anathema. Let's look at GALATIANS 1:4. We are rescued from our sins according to what? According to the will of our God and Father. Let that sink in.
-) **SLIDE 20.** Canon 12. *“If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.”*
-) What this statement is telling us is that if you believe you are saved, you can never have assurance of that salvation. Why? Because, according to Catholic dogma, your salvation is based upon your works, your contrition, your penance, and your obedience to the sacraments and church tradition. All which can fail. And trust me. They do and they will.
-) **SLIDE 21.** PHILIPPIANS 1:6. *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”* There's that word “confident” being used again by Paul as he writes to the church at Philippi.

-) But remember, the reformers supported the Biblical teaching of “*confidence*,” so the Catholic Church had no choice but to refute it. It was as if they had to be in direct opposition to any Reformation theology.
-) The Catholic Church may have their anathemas from 500 years ago, but we have ours too—from 2000 years ago; and it’s the Word of God. And it’s all crystal clear written here in the first chapter of the Book of GALATIANS.
-) I said last week that one of Satan’s biggest lies is for a person to believe that their good works earns them good standings with God and a place in salvation. Catholic doctrine teaches this lie. And if 1.7 billion people believe and trust what their church teaches, then 1.7 billion people are hopelessly lost.
-) **SLIDE 22**. Now you know why Jesus says in MATTHEW 7:13-14 that only FEW find the path of salvation.
-) And it’s all because someone brought a different gospel to the ears and to the minds and to the hearts of unsuspecting and undiscerning souls. And when the blind lead the blind, they both fall into a pit.
-) **SLIDE 23**. So, Mike, what is the gospel? We will speak more about the specifics of the gospel in later messages. You need to come back so we can continue to learn. But if you want to know now, I have a sermon series on THE GOSPEL on the BGCC website. Let’s get the gospel right!
-) What can happen in less than five years? In this case, some very deadly things. And we need to thank the Holy Spirit for inspiring Paul for today’s wonderful words of Scripture.
-) The truth isn’t always easy, but it does matter. And the truth will set you free!

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