

Sunday, August 28, 2022—Galatians 1:7-9 What Does it Mean to Be Asscursed?

Review: The Gospel of Christ is Equivalent to the Grace of Christ

- The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes during the dispensation of grace (Romans 1:16).
 - What saves the believer is grace (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9, Titus 2:11).
- The phrase gospel of Christ is used interchangeably with the grace of Christ.
 - The Galatians were removed from “the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Galatians 1:6).
 - Thus, the “grace of Christ” must be some sort of gospel in order to be removed from it unto “another” gospel.
 - Verse 7 reveals that the name for the gospel described in verse 6 as the grace of Christ is the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-7).
 - It is thus proper to use gospel of Christ interchangeably with grace of Christ.
- Paul uses other terms to describe the gospel committed unto him by the Lord, but the common theme is grace.
 - “the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24)
 - “the word of the truth of the gospel . . . the grace of God in truth” (Colossians 1:5-6)

Galatians 1:7

- **Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.**
- **Which is not another**—according to Paul, any message which includes human performance of any kind is not the gospel.
- **but there be some that trouble you**—these Judaizers were troubling the Galatians. They were stirring them up and agitating them by causing them to be confused. They were troubling them through the preaching of a perverted gospel.
- **pervert the gospel of Christ**—the word rendered “pervert” is found two other places in the New Testament. Both times it is translated as “turned” and conveys the idea of one thing being turned into something else.

- Acts 2:20—“The sun shall be turned into darkness, . . .”
- James 4:9—“. . .let your laughter be turned to mourning, . . . “
- The English word “[pervert](#)” carries the following meanings according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*:
 - To turn from truth, propriety, or from its proper purpose; to distort from its true use or end; as, to pervert reason by misdirecting it; to pervert the laws by misinterpreting and misapplying them; to pervert justice; to pervert the meaning of an author; to pervert nature; to pervert truth.
 - To turn from the right; to corrupt.
- Can you think of one positive connotation associated with the word pervert?
- In the context of the passage, a perversion of the gospel is anything that adds religious works to grace.
- There are three basic ways people “pervert” the gospel of Christ.
 - Work to Get Saved
 - Matthew 19:16-17—Christ tells the rich young ruler that he needs to keep the commandments if he wants to enter into life.
 - Romans 3:28—Paul says that we conclude a man is not justified by the keeping of the Law.
 - Work to Stay Saved
 - Matthew 24:13—one needs to continually work and endure to the end in order to maintain salvation.
 - Colossians 2:6—Paul says that we need to continue to live the Christian life on the basis of grace through faith.
 - Work to Prove You Are Saved
 - Matthew 7:20—this verse is used to promote the idea that your works and fruits will be good if you are truly saved. If you are not saved, then your fruit will be bad.
 - Ephesians 2:10—the only reason we are even capable of producing anything good is because we already have Christ in us.

Galatians 1:8-9

- We are going to take verses 8 and 9 together because they are so similar to each other.
- **Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you. 9) 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.**
- Paul tells the Galatians that if he himself or any angel from Heaven preaches any other gospel than the one Paul preached to them initially, they should not listen to that preacher.
- **let him be accursed**—Paul pulls no punches; those who pervert the Gospel of Christ by adding human effort are cursed. Paul even says that if he changes his message, he is guilty of doing the same thing and would be cursed as well.
- **Accursed**—is a translation of the Greek word *anathema*. This word occurs 6 times in the New Testament. According to *Strong's Concordance* in this context it denotes the following:
 - a thing devoted to God without hope of being redeemed, and if an animal, to be slain; therefore a person or thing doomed to destruction:
 - a curse
 - a man accursed, devoted to the direst of woes
- Consider the following occurrences.
 - Acts 23:14—“under a great curse”
 - Romans 9:3—“accursed”
 - I Corinthians 12:3—“accursed”
 - I Corinthians 16:22—the word “anathema” comes from the same Greek word translated “accursed” in the other verses.
- The English word “[anathema](#)” carries the following relevant meanings according Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* from 1828.
 - Excommunication with curses. Hence, a curse or denunciation by ecclesiastical authority, accompanying excommunication. This species of excommunication was practiced in the ancient churches, against notorious offenders; all churches were warned not to receive them; all magistrates and private persons were admonished not to harbor or maintain them, and priests were enjoined not to converse with them, or attend their funeral.
- Meanwhile “[accursed](#)” means the following according to Noah Webster.
 - Doomed to destruction or misery.
 - Separated from the faithful; cast out of the church; excommunicated.

- Worthy of the curse; detestable; execrable
- Wicked; malignant in the extreme.
- Paul’s statements in verses 8 and 9 to “let him be accursed” are in the imperative mood i.e., they are a command. Paul is literally commanding that those who preach another gospel should be doomed to an accursed position. According to J. Vernon McGee, author of the commentary series *Thru The Bible* this expression literally means “let him be damned.” (McGee, 154)
 - The statement is repeated in verse 9 for emphasis. Paul doesn’t want the Galatians to miss it.
- Revelation 14:6-7—an angel does preach another gospel in the Word of God and he is not accursed.
- If you still have questions about the necessity of right division, you need to take note of these passages. An angel does preach another gospel in Revelation 14 and is not accursed for doing so.
- I Corinthians 9:17—this angel is plainly preaching to another group in another dispensation. There is more than one gospel in the word of God, however, only one applies directly to us during this Dispensation of Grace: the Gospel of the Grace of God.
- Galatians 1:8-9—consider the following from the pen of J. Vernon McGee in conclusion:
 - “The Judaizers did not deny the facts of the gospel—that Jesus died and rose again. What they denied was that this was adequate. They insisted that you have to keep the Law plus trusting Christ. Paul is saying that whoever tried to mingle law and grace—let him be damned! Why? Because they pervert the gospel. They do not deny the facts of the gospel, but they misinterpret those facts. They pervert the gospel.” (McGee, 157)

Works Cited

McGee, J. Vernon. *Tru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Volume V*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983.