

Review Questions (Lesson #2)

Answer T for true, F for false

1. The false teachers in Galatia preached the true gospel corrupted by a few minor changes.
2. Paul and his helpers had warned the Galatians previously against perverted gospels.
3. The false teachers in Galatia were of the same variety as those who came to Antioch.
4. The Galatians had never really believed the true Gospel.
5. The false teachers made the Galatians afraid that they could not be saved unless they submitted to Jewish legalism.

Give short answers:

1. What does it mean to be “accursed”?
2. Even if an angel really had appeared to Joseph Smith, Jr., why would we reject the book of Mormon?
3. What people were really seeking to please men? (Galatians 6:12-13) Why?
4. What does it mean that Paul “marveled” and what was it that he marveled about?
5. When did Paul try to please men? What evidence shows he was not a men-pleaser now?

Fill in the blanks:

1. In verse 9, Paul uses a _____ class _____. Someone was _____ sentence, where the condition is assumed to be _____ a _____ to the Galatians.
2. By _____ that _____, they had _____ from God.
3. The Galatians’ _____ Paul had _____ and the _____ to them were _____.
4. What Paul had _____ and what the _____ had _____ were exactly the _____.
5. As a _____ (slave) of _____, Paul had no _____ of his own.

Galatians: Guarding the Gospel of Grace

Lesson #2: The One True Gospel (Galatians 1:6-10)

Imagine how Paul must have felt when he learned that some of the Christians in the region of Galatia, where he had labored so often and so hard, no longer believed that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was enough to save them. They no longer believed the pure gospel that Paul had preached to them. In fact, they no longer accepted Paul as a genuine apostle of Christ. To salvage as many of these precious souls as he could, Paul wrote the letter than we call Galatians. He pulled no punches, and his letter was not politically correct. He told them that they had accepted a perverted gospel. He said that those who preached that perverted gospel were accursed. He said that the Galatians, who had believed that perverted gospel, were fools for exchanging their liberty in Christ for the slavery of legalism. While such language may seem harsh, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use it in order to restore the wayward Galatians.

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel” (v. 6). The New Testament word “marvel” is usually used in the sense of admiring wonder. Here, however, Paul uses it in the sense of amazed disappointment (compare Luke 11:38, where the Pharisee marveled, but clearly disapproved of Jesus). Paul’s astonishment was due to the hasty manner in which the Galatians had abandoned the pure gospel. Evidently they had still been sound when he had last seen them at the beginning of his third missionary journey; but now they had embraced a different gospel. God, in His grace, had called them to salvation by means of the gospel Paul had preached to them (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). By abandoning that gospel, they had turned away from God. No wonder Paul was horrified!

“which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (v. 7). The word “different” in v. 6 means “of a different kind.” Here in v. 7, “another” is a distinct Greek word meaning “another of the same kind.” This new “gospel” the Galatians had embraced was not merely a slightly altered gospel of the same kind (which would have been bad enough); it was an outright perversion, a 180-degree about-face. The word “pervert” literally means “turn around.” The same word is used in Acts 2:20, where the sun would be “turned” into darkness, and James 4:9 where laughter would be “turned” into mourning. Sun/darkness and

laughter/mourning are easily recognized as opposites. Likewise the Galatians' perverted gospel and the true gospel Paul had preached to them were opposites.

The promoters of this perverted gospel were "troubling" the Galatians. This is the same word the apostles and elders in Jerusalem used to describe the Judaizers who had come to Antioch and other predominantly Gentile congregations (Acts 15:24). The false teachers among the Galatian churches were of the same stripe, insisting on circumcision and adherence to the Law of Moses. The word "trouble" means to stir up or agitate; it is often coupled with fear (see, for example, Luke 1:12). The Christians were being made to be afraid that they could not be saved unless they complied with Jewish legalism.

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (v. 8). To be accursed is to be consigned to destruction. See Joshua 6:17-19 where the city of Jericho was "accursed," meaning that it was to be utterly destroyed. The Israelites were forbidden to keep any of the spoils of the city for themselves; all was to be destroyed, and what could not be burned (gold, silver, etc.) was to be put into the treasury of the Lord. Here in Galatians 1:8, the promoters of the perverted gospel were accursed, which would mean if they did not repent, they would be destroyed eternally in Hell.

Of course Paul did not expect that he, his fellow-workers, or a heavenly angel would preach a false gospel; but even if that were to happen, the Galatians were not to embrace it. Holy angels had played a role in the giving of the Law of Moses (see Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53 and Deuteronomy 33:2). The Jews had a tendency to worship angels (see Colossians 2:18), and the Judaizing teachers may well have claimed that angels had authorized their perverted gospel. Paul is not saying this had happened, but even if it were to occur, the Galatians were to reject it.

Joseph Smith, Jr., claimed that in 1823 an angel named Moroni appeared to him, directing him to the location of some golden plates upon which were written the Book of Mormon. Smith asserted that the Book of Mormon is "the fullness of the everlasting gospel." While we do not believe Smith's outlandish tale for even a moment, even if it had occurred, Bible believers would know by reading the Book of Mormon that it is a "different gospel" than that which Paul preached, and is, therefore, to be rejected.

"As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any

other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (v. 9). This warning against embracing a perverted gospel was nothing new; Paul and his fellow-laborers had told the Galatians before! No doubt this was partly why Paul was so upset with them. In this verse, Paul changes from the presumption that neither he nor a heavenly angel would proclaim a false gospel (v. 8), to the unhappy fact that some in Galatia were, in fact, advancing a perverted gospel. The Greek language has four classes of conditional sentences using "if." In verse 9, Paul uses a first-class conditional sentence, where the condition is assumed as fulfilled. Someone was teaching a false gospel to the Galatians; and regardless of who it was, he was accursed.

Note that in this 9th verse, Paul warns against any gospel other than what the Galatians had "received." In verse 8, he warned against anything other than what he and his fellow-workers had preached to them. Of course, what Paul had preached and what the Galatians had received were exactly the same. Paul had preached the pure truth of Christ's gospel, and the Galatians had believed and obeyed it (compare 1 Corinthians 15:1).

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men?" (v. 10a). Although Paul's enemies may have convinced some of the Galatians that he was a man-pleaser, he denies the charge and offers proof to support his denial. The word "persuade" would be much more accurately translated "seek the favor of." It is virtually synonymous with "please" in the next part of the verse. In fact, it was Paul's enemies who were seeking to please men (see Galatians 6:12, 13). Their fellow-Jews, whether believers in Christ or not, were pleased to have them binding circumcision and other elements of the Law of Moses upon the Gentiles. Paul, on the other hand, shows in the last part of 1:10 why it is not logical that he would be a man-pleaser:

"For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (v. 10b). At one time, Paul (Saul of Tarsus) had been anxious to please his fellow-Jews. Therefore, he had viciously persecuted Christians. Now, however, he was on the receiving end of persecution because of his devotion to Jesus Christ. Had he still wished to please men, he certainly would have joined with the Judaizers in binding Jewish legalism upon the Gentile Christians. That would have ended all of the persecution he received from the Jews, for they would have been happy with him. As a bondservant (slave) of Christ, though, Paul had no rights of his own. His only goal was to please his Lord. Preaching a perverted gospel in order to avoid persecution wasn't even an option!