THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

"Is There Another Gospel?"

Gal. 1:6-10

1. The Epistle to the Romans was written to teach the doctrine of justification (a declaration of righteousness before God) by grace through faith.
2. Because this doctrinal teaching was questioned by the early church, the Spirit of God has included in Scripture the Epistle to the Galatian churches. This Epistle defends the doctrine extrapolated in the Epistle to the Romans.
3. The Apostle Paul is the instrument whom God used to write both of these Epistles. To demonstrate he had a right to defend the doctrine, Paul established his apostleship (l:1-3). He reaffirmed the complete work of Christ on the cross (1:4). These matters give God the glory (1:5).
4. Having established himself and his message (1:1-5), Paul turns his attention to the disastrous work of the Judaizers (leaders from Jerusalem who misconstrued the grace of God). They influenced the believers in the Galatian churches to question the Gospel of God's grace. Paul's response is given. It involves:

1. A DEFECTION v. 6

This defection is:-

a. A marvel

This verb expresses surprise at something which is totally unexpected. The idea of wondering at something which is blameworthy may be indicated here (cf. Mark 6:6; John 7:21). Surely if one understands the grace of God, how could he desire anything else!? Reread the glory of God's grace in v. 4. You too will wonder!

b. A removal

The use of this verb to indicate a true conversion to Christ is found in the early Church Fathers. Here, however, it is used of a "turncoat." It relates to those who turn renegade against the Gospel of God's grace! It was so used of Heraclea who turned from a Stoic to become an Epicurean. The removal or defection had not yet been completed. The present tense shows that, but it also notes the defection was in process and would continue unless checked by this letter. Moreover, the middle voice of the verb indicates the Galatians themselves were responsible for their own declension from the faith.

The adverbial phrase "so soon" or "so quickly" may have reference to the conversion of the Galatians, the Apostle's last visit, or the entry of the false teachers. The last one seems most probable, although the others may well be true. The point is this. The Galatians had made a decision for God's grace, now they suddenly begin to turn away. How sad! The defection MUST STOP!

c. A proposal

The call stated here is the work of the triune God. The Spirit of God applies the call of the Father in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gravity of the situation is clear. To turn away from the One Who called is to turn from God Himself! It wasn't the setting aside of an opinion or some alternate way, but God Himself! No surprise that Paul was surprised! No wonder Paul wondered! Who wouldn't?

2. AN INFECTION vv. 6-7

These prepositions tell the whole story of it.

a. From

This is a matter of separation from God Who had called the Galatians.

b. In

The call of God was in very deed in the sphere of God's infinite fathomless grace possessed in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Unto

The switch being made is to "another" gospel i.e. another of a different kind. The Greek term used here distinguishes; it notes another "as one of two." The distinction is clear. If the Galatians continue on their course, they will land in heterodoxy--something entirely different than the grace of God salvation they claimed to have espoused. That is the significance of the word "another" in v. 7. It means another of a different kind! The preposition "unto" affirms the direction of the switch.

Two verbs describe the tragic results of it.

a. Troubling

The opening words of v. 7 should read "which is not another (a second Gospel) except (only in this sense that) there are some who trouble you." The gospel the Judaizers bring is NOT a Gospel at all. "The troublers" (Judaizers) were shaking their allegiance to the one true Gospel. They were causing factions. What a description of bearers of false doctrine!

b. Preventing

This verb means to change something into an opposite character (cf. Acts 2:20; James 4:9). A Gospel which has thus been perverted is really no Gospel at all! It is a total rejection of the Gospel of which Christ is the Object. God's grace in Christ is therefore supplanted by a gospel of works. Biblically, that is not the Gospel.

3. A CORRECTION vv. 8, 9

To confirm Scripture's insistence on a defection and the infection going on in Galatia, two statements are recorded:

a. About the presentation of the Gospel

Three particular persons (groups) are held as possible culprits: we (Paul and company), angel (cf. Acts 14:11-13), or anyone (the indicative suggests someone then and there, perhaps Judaizers). No matter who might preach, if it is not the true Gospel, he is to be anathema i.e. incur the disfavor of God.

b. About the definition of the Gospel

The preposition used for "any other" (in both verses) indicates "contrary to that which," hence, a gospel which was not preached by Paul (v. 8) and received by Galatians (v. 9). This is a very specific Gospel and correctly indicated in Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-10). To add to or be opposed to what was preached and received is wrong. Such are to be devoted for destruction. The uniqueness of grace salvation is patent!

Conclusion The stakes are high. There is but one Gospel of the grace of God whereby a soul is saved from sin. To deviate from this is to incur the disfavor of Almighty God. Lord, keep us true to Your Word!