

## LOSING MY RELIGION

### "GOOD NEWS GONE BAD" GALATIANS 1:6-10

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Salvation by Grace** – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*

The book of Galatians was most likely written in 49 A.D., following Paul's first missionary journey recorded in Acts 13:3-14:28, but prior to the convening of the Jerusalem council right after recorded in Acts 15:1-31. On each stop along their eighteen-month journey, he and Barnabas went to Jews first and then to Gentiles, proclaiming the gospel in the local synagogue before taking it to the Gentiles (see 13:14-52). Once they had planted churches throughout Galatia, they returned to Antioch in Syria. Sadly, shortly after their return, Paul received word that certain "Judaizers" had dogged his steps preaching another gospel after him, one that was no gospel at all. Upon hearing that, he immediately penned Galatians to put an end to their mischief among the churches.

Paul's successful mission unfortunately turned out to be problematic. One author summarizes the firestorm that followed this way: "The increasing number of Gentiles who were becoming Christians raised a problem within the church. What was the relationship of the church to Judaism? Some

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***We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.***

— the Apostle Peter

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Christians, especially the more conservative Jewish believers, argued that Christianity was a party within Judaism, the party of true believers. They assumed that Gentile Christians, therefore, needed to become Jewish proselytes, which involved being circumcised and obeying the Mosaic Law . . . Other Christians, the more broad-minded Jewish believers and the Gentile converts, saw no need for these restrictions. They viewed the church not as a party within Judaism, but as a distinct group—separate from Judaism—that incorporated both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. This difference of viewpoint led to the meeting Luke recorded in this section. He described it at length, in order to explain the issues involved, and to clarify their importance. Therefore not a few students of Acts believe that chapter 15 is the most crucial chapter in the entire book" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Acts," 2015 ed., 218-19, [www.sonlight.com](http://www.sonlight.com)).

The Jerusalem Council's deliberations opened with demands brought by some believers belonging to the party of the Pharisees (v. 5)—converted Pharisees, not necessarily ex-Pharisees, since a Pharisee could become a Christian without relinquishing his distinctive beliefs concerning Scripture and theology—who claimed that unless Gentiles are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, they cannot be saved (v. 1); so as far as they were concerned, "Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses" (v. 5). After much discussion, Peter testified (vv. 6-11), and then Barnabas and Paul reported on their mission (v. 12). Finally, after quoting Amos 9:11-12 to show that the present salvation of Gentiles, apart from Judaism, fits what

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Amos said about future Gentile blessing, James concluded, "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God" (v.19). In short, James advised that Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised and to obey the law of Moses. Instead they should be encouraged to "abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood," not because they must do these things to be saved or sanctified but for the sake of unbelieving Jews who find these practices abominable. As he said, "Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath" (v. 21). The commentator cited above explains: "In the weekly synagogue Scripture readings, teachers of the Mosaic Law had stressed Jewish scruples regarding these matters for generations. Consequently the Jews regarded them as extremely important. If Gentile Christians disregarded the convictions of these Jews, they would only alienate those they hoped to bring to faith in Jesus Christ or to growth in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 8:13)" (226). At the end of the day, the council ruled in favor of Paul and indeed of the Gentiles.

The council's ruling was reported to the Gentiles in a letter to them, which read: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. *You will do well to avoid these things*" (vv. 28-29, italics added). "To sum up, we may say that two types of 'necessary' questions were raised at the Jerusalem Council. The first had to do with the theological necessity of circumcision and the Jewish law for salvation, and that was rejected. The second had to do with the practical necessity of Gentile Christians abstaining from certain practices for the sake of Jewish-Gentile fellowship within the church and for the sake of the Jewish Christian mission throughout the Diaspora, and that was approved" (Charles H. Savelle, "A Reexamination of the Prohibitions in Acts 15," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161:644 [October-December 2004]:468).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Galatians 1:6-10

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*

*10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

### Cf., another translation

*6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are following a different gospel- 7 not that there really is another gospel, but there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell! 9 As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!10 Am I now trying to gain the approval of people, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ! (NET)*

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle "astonished" in v. 6.
- \* Box "that" indicating *reason* in v. 6.
- \* Underline "so quickly" in v. 6.
- \* Circle "deserting" in v. 6.
- \* Bracket "the one who called you" in v. 6.
- \* Box "by" indicating *means* in v. 6.
- \* Underline "gospel" in vv. 6, 7 (2x), 8, 9.
- \* Circle "different gospel" in v. 6.
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 8.
- \* Box "if" introducing a conditional clause in vv. 8, 9.
- \* Circle "condemned" in v. 8.
- \* Bracket each of the two rhetorical questions in v. 10.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Paul begins by saying, "I am astonished." What *tone* is he taking with the Galatians?
2. Put what he means by "*different* gospel" in your own words.
3. *Who* was throwing *whom* into confusion and why?
4. The "*gospel of Christ*" is a seemingly simple phrase. Explain what it means.
5. What does verse 8 tell you about the gospel?
6. Verse 8 contains a *curse*, which Paul repeats in verse 9. *What* is he saying, and *why* does he say it twice?
7. Paul uses two *rhetorical* questions to make one and the same point in verse 10a. What is it?
8. To verse 10b answer the question, why not?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about a *different* gospel, which is really not *another*, in circulation today.

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## day 3

### EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Paul penned his letter to the Galatians shortly after hearing that his recent converts in Asia Minor were turning away from the gospel, which he had preached and they had believed, to an entirely different message being preached by a select group of Jewish Christians. These Judaizers from Jerusalem insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order to be saved. Put differently, they claimed Gentiles had to become Jews to become Christians. To defend their message they challenged Paul's apostolic authority. What's more, they questioned his integrity. They alleged he had stripped certain legitimate legal requirements from the gospel in order to make his message more appealing to Gentiles. Paul wrote Galatians to defend his apostleship, his integrity, and the gospel he preached, and to put an end to the Judaizers' mischief-making in the churches.

Paul wastes no time addressing the bogus charges circulating against him and the false theological claims spreading from church to church. In the opening verses of the letter's body (vv. 6-7), he rebukes his readers for turning away "so quickly" from the gospel he preached to them—what one commentator calls "an almost inconceivable turn of events" (Donald K. Campbell, "Galatians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 590). He then makes the implicit explicit, explaining that by turning away from the gospel that he preached, they were actually deserting more than his message. They were deserting God, who called them, as well as "the grace of Christ," the means God had used; they were exchanging their birthright of grace for a bowl of legalistic stew. How ironic! The Galatians had to be confused; after all, their new gospel was no gospel at all. As another commentator observes: "Gospel,' of course, means good news. However, the 'gospel' that fascinated his readers was not good news. The Greek word *heteros*, meaning 'another of a different kind,' appears in verse 6, while *allos*, meaning 'another of the same kind,' occurs in verse 7. Sometimes these words are interchangeable (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:4), but here and elsewhere they indicate significant differences. This new, 'different' gospel was bad news. Teachers of

false doctrine who were stirring up unrest had followed Paul. The root of the word translated 'disturbing' (v. 7) ["throwing into confusion" NIV] is one that describes the opposite of what the word translated 'peace' (v. 3) means. These false teachers were distorting the good news of Christ" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Galatians," 2015 ed., 12, [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)).

In the following verses (vv. 8-9), Paul explains that the gospel is fixed; its definition excludes any possible alternatives. The only true gospel is the message he preached to the Galatians and they accepted (vv. 8-9), the same message he received by revelation from Jesus Christ (v. 12). In fact, Paul insists if anyone preaches any other gospel than the one he and Barnabas preached, that preacher forfeits his claim to authority. "Let him be eternally condemned!" To emphasize his point, he reminds his readers, if anyone preaches any other gospel than the one they first accepted, "let him be eternally condemned!" The prior warning, mentioned in verse 9, may refer to what he had just said in verse 8 but more likely refers to a warning Paul had given them when he was with them in person (Longenecker, 17; Constable, 13). In either case, as far as the apostle is concerned, the preacher's authority is derived from the gospel not vice versa.

Paul's rhetorical questions in verse 10 are meant to debunk accusations leveled against him regarding his integrity. First he asks, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?" In other words, "I am now trying to win the approval of God, not of men." Then he asks, "Or am I trying to please men?" In other words, "I am not trying to please men." The gist of his words is nicely summarized as follows: "After the twice-repeated *anathema*, Paul rather emotionally interjects two somewhat defiant questions, which may be paraphrased as follows: 'Now, does that sound like the language of one whose main concern is to gain the favor of others?' He then asserts that knowing himself to be a servant of Christ, the stance of a 'man pleaser' would be impossible" (Longenecker, 19).

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## *The Message of the Passage*

*There is no other gospel than the gospel of salvation by grace alone that Paul preached, which he received by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 6 **astonished** "I am astonished that" is a conventional form of rebuke in Greek letters; sometimes it expresses displeasure perhaps more than surprise. This leads one commentator to conclude: "It is more accurate, therefore, to call [thaumazo hoti] an 'astonishment-rebuke' formula. Paul is certainly displeased with his converts, as the lack of a thanksgiving section in Galatians clearly indicates. But the note of astonishment in his rebuke seems more prominent than the note of irony" (Longenecker, 14). "The idea of wondering at something blameworthy is frequently implied in this word" (Charles J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [Boston: Draper and Halliday, n.d.; reprint, Minneapolis: James Family Publishing Co., 1978], 27).

v. 6 **so quickly** "The best evidence points to Paul's writing Galatians before the Jerusalem Council, held in A.D. 49, and after he and Barnabas had evangelized Asia Minor on their first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). I am assuming the South Galatia destination of the epistle. Consequently, it had been only a few months since his readers had accepted the genuine gospel, that Paul had preached to them, and had turned from it to another. They had begun to turn away 'quickly' in the sense that not much time had elapsed between Paul's preaching to them and their turning away from his teaching, not that their apostasy had been rapid or speedy" (Constable, 11).

v. 6 **deserting** "The Greek word is 'a colorful one,' as Guthrie notes, 'used both of military revolt and of a change of attitude' (in loc.). Moreover, since the verb is probably in the middle voice, rather than the passive, it is not even possible for the Galatians to claim that their conduct was the result of outside influences. This is something they were doing to themselves and were responsible for. The only ray of hope is that they were still only in the process of deserting and could possibly be reclaimed" (James Montgomery Boice, "Galatians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:428). "'The present tense of the verb [*metatitheste*],' as Burton points out, 'indicates clearly that when the apostle wrote, the apostasy of the Galatians was as yet only in process. They were, so to speak, on the point, or more exactly in the very act, of turning'" (Longenecker, 14).

v. 6 **the one . . .** While Paul may be referring to himself or to Christ, other references in Galatians indicate he most likely has God in mind (see Longenecker, 15). "It is not merely that they have deserted an idea or a movement; rather, they have deserted the very one who had called them to faith. This one is God the Father. Embracing legalism means rejecting God, according to Paul's reasoning, because it means substituting man for God in one's life" (Boice, 428).

vv. 6, 7 **different, no** Lit., "a different [*heteron*] gospel; which is really not another [*allo*]" (NASB). Paul uses two Greek words that can be translated "other or another," *heteron* and *allos*. "Generally speaking, [*heteron*] and [*allos*] are synonyms, with both words usually denoting an enumerative sense ('an additional one') rather than a differentiative sense ('another of a different kind') . . . Yet here in context there seems little doubt that he means to suggest a qualitative difference, with [*heteros*] signaling 'another of a different kind' and [*allos*] another of the same kind" (Longenecker, 15; cf., Boice, 429-30). "Though he [Paul] said 'a different gospel' actually there cannot be another gospel as long as the gospel is understood to be God's way of salvation in Christ. *The gospel is one*. Therefore any system of salvation that varies from it is counterfeit" (Boice 428, italics added).

v. 7 **gospel of Christ** "The genitive [*tou christou*] is undoubtedly both objective (referring to Christ as its content) and subjective (referring to Christ as its source) . . . Paul must be taken in the same way as in Mark 1:1: the gospel which has Jesus Christ (and God through Christ) as its focus and God (together with Christ) as its source" (Longenecker, 16).

v. 8 **condemned** "The word translated 'eternally condemned' (*anathema*) is related to the Hebrew word *herem* and is used of that which is devoted to God, usually for destruction. In spiritual terms it means damnation" (429). "The basic idea in Paul's usage, as Johannes Behm point out, it 'delivering up to the judicial wrath of God' (*TDNT* 1:354)" (Longenecker, 17).

v. 10 **please men** "Paul had been accused of being a pleaser of men by his enemies, who no doubt also implied that he was such at the expense of the truth (cf. 2 Cor 10; Gal 6:12). Would his enemies dare to say this now, Paul asks, after he has written so sharply? Do men-pleasers pronounce against those who teach false gospels? . . . He is merely saying that he did not please men as opposed to pleasing God . . . The sense is this: 'Have I made myself clear enough about Christ's gospel? Can anyone now charge that I seek to please men in presenting it?'" (Boice, 430).

### Family Time

Parents, our summer series in *PantegoKids* is called **True or False?** Like the adults, we will be studying the book of Galatians to discover how to live out true faith. *Our kids' lessons, however, will not textually align each week with adult teaching. Core competencies will also likely be different. We will be memorizing Galatians 5:22-26.*

When the new kid came to school halfway through the year, Jason remembered something he had heard in his small group at church. His leader had challenged the kids in his group to be nice to a new kid and invite him to sit with them at lunch. The new kid, Alex, sat by himself the first day so Jason decided he would invite him to his table the next day. Relieved, Alex moved his tray to Jason's table. All of Jason's friends got up and left. They told Jason later that the new kid was weird and they didn't want to sit by him. Our kids are in dilemmas like this every day. As parents we teach our kids to live like Jesus would, loving others and walking in truth. However, sometimes it's harder to do in real life. Even Peter, the bold disciple, struggled with not conforming to the opinions and pressures of others. Help your kids learn to negotiate these moments by role-playing what living authentic faith looks like. And then pray they choose to do the right thing!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Galatians 2

1. According to verse 6, what are we not judged on?
2. Why did Paul oppose Peter?
3. In verse 16, what does Paul say about observing the law?

#### What Do You Think

Paul wasn't saying that people's religious practices were bad, he just said what mattered was their heart. What did Paul mean when he said he had been "crucified with Christ" in verse 20?

#### What R U Going To Do

Find someone who is different from you in some way and then do something kind for them. Remember God does not look at our appearance but at our heart.

### MEMORY TIME

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the Memory Verse throughout the house.

#### Core Comp

Identity in Christ - I believe I am special because I am a child of God.

#### Memory Verse

Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).