

The Absolute Gospel

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: New Testament #55



Objective: To conclude thoughts from 2 Corinthians, introduce Paul's letter to the Galatians, and understand the major problem Paul is addressing in Galatians.



Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you...?

– 2 Corinthians 13:5

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

– Galatians 1:6-9

In 2 Corinthians, Paul answered the accusations that the church of Corinth made against him and his ministry. They could not attack the logic of Paul's counsel to them in 1 Corinthians, so they attacked Paul and his ministry. He answered them by writing about the ministry and the credentials of the minister.

Also in 2 Corinthians, Paul spoke of his ministry and the hardships he had endured as an example to the Corinthian church. The Philippians supported him financially so he could minister to people like the Corinthians without having to make tents to earn a living. He praised the Philippians' openness and honesty in giving and the quality of their giving. Then he exhorted the Corinthians to take part in a love offering he was collecting for the suffering saints in Jerusalem. He instructed them to have men from their church take this gift to Jerusalem and make sure the money was given to those who were suffering. Paul emphasized honesty and accountability in stewardship and finance.

At the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul strongly urged them to examine themselves to make sure they were Christians.

Paul's letter to the Galatians focused on a more serious problem. Paul had heard that some Jewish leaders were teaching the people a different gospel, an apostate gospel. They were teaching that people had to follow the Jewish laws in addition to following Christ. Paul opened his letter to the Galatians by stating firmly that no other gospel exists but the one he preached when he was with them: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Gospel, the true gospel, says that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, plus nothing.

The church at Galatia was listening to and following false teachers. Paul reminded them that he had been called by God to preach. Paul also wrote that the Gospel he received had come to him directly from Jesus Himself and not from any man. An important truth we learn in Galatians is that we need to know the absolute Gospel so that we do not follow false teachers.



1. True or False? At the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul told the church to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith.
2. True or False? Paul commended the Corinthians for their selfless giving to support him.
3. True or False? The problem confronting the church at Galatia was less serious than the problems of the church at Corinth.
4. True or False? Paul was chosen to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians to send some men to take the offering to Jerusalem? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. He wanted to make sure the money made it to the suffering saints.
 - b. Sending several men with the money would make them accountable to deliver it.
 - c. He wanted his own integrity to be an example to the Corinthians.
 - d. He did not want to be bothered with delivering it.
6. How was Paul's letter to the Galatians different from other letters? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. It was filled with warmth and affection (kind and gentle words).
 - b. It was filled with emotion (forceful words).
 - c. It was filled with righteous indignation (warnings of false teachers).
 - d. It was filled with jokes (funny stories).

7. Why was Paul astonished?
 - a. The church had sent him a large sum of money for his ministry.
 - b. The church was allowing sexual immorality in its midst.
 - c. The church had been blessed with a tremendous outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit.
 - d. The church was turning away from the Gospel of Christ to a perverted gospel.

8. What does the Gospel of Jesus Christ say about salvation? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. It is not necessary.
 - b. It is by the grace of God.
 - c. It is earned by many works.
 - d. It is available to all.

9. The “perverted” Gospel that others preached to the Galatians is considered apostasy. What does the word *apostasy* mean?
 - a. “To stand away from”
 - b. “To stand with”
 - c. “To join with”
 - d. “To believe wholeheartedly”

10. Who did Paul receive the absolute Gospel from?
 - a. His rabbi, Gamaliel
 - b. The other apostles
 - c. The Old Testament prophets
 - d. Jesus Christ Himself

11. After Paul’s time in Damascus and Arabia, who did Paul meet with? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. Matthew
 - b. James
 - c. Timothy
 - d. Peter

12. Why do you think that Paul was so upset with the Galatians? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. The message of grace that he had preached was being added to.
 - b. The Gospel was being confused.
 - c. The Jewish leaders were teaching that Jesus’ death and resurrection were not enough to be saved.
 - d. He was jealous that the Jewish leaders who were preaching the apostate gospel were becoming popular.



How do people try “perverting” the absolute Gospel today? What are some ways that you can be on guard against false teachers? What can you do to share the absolute Gospel with others?



Praise God for Jesus' sacrifice, which makes salvation by grace through faith possible. Praise God that His gift of salvation is free and that you can do nothing to earn it or to lose it. Thank God that the Bible teaches us about Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation. Ask God to help you recognize false teachers so you will not be confused and led away from the Truth. Ask God to help you teach others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Going Deeper

1. Why was Paul so angry and emotional when he wrote this letter to the Galatians? _____

2. What is Paul claiming about the gospel he preached when he was with the Galatians?
(Consider 1:1, 11) _____

3. Why is Paul so emphatic in verses eight and nine of chapter 1? _____

4. Precisely what is Paul claiming about his experience in Arabia? _____

5. How do you think Paul persuaded the apostles in Jerusalem that he was as much an apostle as they were? _____

6. Why do you think God sent the former Rabbi and scholar, Paul, to the barbarian Gentiles, and He sent the illiterate fisherman, Peter, to the Jewish Rabbis? _____

7. How and why does Paul, who wrote half the New Testament, force us to come to a verdict about these claims he is making in verse 20 of the first chapter of this letter? _____
