

# Galatians Explained Word by Word

*Galatians Explained*

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**Bible Text:** Galatians 1:6-9  
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## **Bethel Netherlands Reformed Congregation**

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Some occupations like being a fireman and going into a burning house and rescuing families, risking your life, that's dangerous. Or a police officer is having to arrest a criminal, or people on the ambulance racing to the scene, dangerous occupations and you probably can add more to them. Have you ever thought about being a pastor, how dangerous that is? If you deceive people, if you are an obstacle to sinners, if you preach a false gospel, the false word and deceive people, that's a dangerous occupation to be a false prophet, then. Ezekiel wrote about it, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." Yes, beloved, I will require at thine hand. So Ezekiel felt so responsible, he was shaking, and Luther also, he was shivering before the pulpit and that's something, I have to preach the full counsel of God and to have it right. I can't afford having it wrong.

The Apostle Paul writes about that as well. He writes in a fervor about, accursed, you're accursed if you preach a false gospel, another gospel which is not the real gospel. We will see that in Galatians 1:6-9. When we read those verses, look at the word "gospel," how often "gospel" is mentioned and "another gospel" is mentioned and "accursed" is mentioned. Galatians 1:6-9.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 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.

Double accursed by the preachers of another gospel. That's the theme for this morning: a double curse on the preachers of another gospel.

Congregation, we have begun to study the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians and the first nine verses are introduction. The first nine verses. We talked about the first five

last Sunday that was the salutation, the greeting, and now the next four verses, 6, 7, 8 and 9, is the situation. So the salutation and the situation. In the salutation he said who he was and who he was talking to, and now he just summarizes in four verses the situation they are in and the Apostle Paul is really upset. As we saw last week, we heard some thunderings at a distance and we saw some clouds, the sky getting dark and some clouds coming in, but we did not see the lightning yet here, but now in this piece you see the lightning. It's a curse. It's accursed.

Now before we start, let me remind you this is a different approach than all the other epistles. In the other epistles, the Apostle Paul is kinder, praising the people, saying things like, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Nice things like that. I don't hear that here. Or, "For God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son without ceasing." We preach the word. "Since we have heard ye have faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which ye have to all the saints." We don't see that. We don't hear that. So he right off begins with being disappointed. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ."

So let us go through those verses. Verse 6, "I," the Apostle Paul, "marvel." I just don't understand it. How come? I marvel. I wonder. I'm amazed. I'm shocked. This really hurts. This is so awkward. It's so strange. I didn't expect this. I kind of did but, no, I didn't.

"I marvel that ye are so soon," so quickly, "so soon removed from him that called you." You know, the Apostle Paul was amazed that under the influence of false teachers that came from the outside, from Jerusalem, the people of the Galatians kind of got astray. Read 2:12 and you'll see the situation as well, 2:12, "For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." So some people have come in, James was one of the leaders, from Jerusalem Christian Jews have come in and they start to teach something else. They started to teach that you also need to be circumcised still and that the food laws are still valid, and they tried to make Jewish people from all the Christians in Galatia.

So they come with something new and the Apostle Paul says, "What's happening? I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him," from God, "him" is God, "from him that called," he called you, "into the grace of Christ," but you are so soon removed, "unto another gospel." You have to read very carefully, "ye are removed." He does not say you have removed yourself. He doesn't say that. You are removed by them. They have removed you. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him," that's passive because he's really hard on those false teachers. Accursed, they're false teachers and they have removed you. He does not want to defend the church of Galatia but he is kind of careful and cautious and loving.

He's hard on those teachers but he has a mild tone, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed." He still has hope for that congregation. He's talking to God's people in the Galatian churches. He's talking to God's people and you read through this epistle and you

will find out he's talking to God's people. But how can he say to God's people that they are so soon removed from him that called them unto the grace of Christ? Because God's children still have that old flesh and they can have times of summer and then it becomes wintertime. There are times of assurance and closeness, and then we have times of darkness and of unbelief. Or maybe you can relate to that, maybe you, child of God, you had times that you really could believe because the Lord applied his word to your heart. Oh, the grace of Christ, it was by grace only and you profoundly enjoyed that and you have eaten the word of God and it tasted so well and the Lord has given that closeness to him, and maybe you could attend the Lord's Supper and that's now some months, a longer time ago and you're so soon removed from the grace as if nothing happened. Something else happens, that unbelief is coming back and that's so soon, so quickly, as if the Apostle Paul said, "I understand that we are flesh, have a fleshly mind, again fall back and are estranged people but so soon, so soon removed? He that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." He's warning them. And of course, they cannot lose their salvation. He's not saying that. They can't lose their salvation. God's people are chosen and paid for and the Lord doesn't repent of that work of salvation. They can't lose it. They will persevere but they can get off the road. They can stray yet and that's what's happening to God's people.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him." So soon removed. Do you see that? That's what John Bunyan was talking about in his "Pilgrim's Progress," that road. And how many times was Christian astray? How many times did he leave the path and took the wrong turn? How often? How soon, how quickly removed from him that called him?

"From him that called you into the grace." From God who called you. "He called you, didn't he," the apostle says. Now he did not only call in the gospel preaching but with the irresistible calling he means here. He called you into it. He called you with that irresistible voice of God, that irresistible work of the Spirit. He called you into it.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ." he made that grace of Christ real for you. He convinced of your sins and you came unto him and you're drawn unto him. He called you into the grace of Christ. The grace of Christ became precious. The grace of Christ became something they could not miss anymore. The grace of Christ, so sweet for a sinner. They enjoy that and the Apostle Paul is reminding them of it, "Remember that you were called into the grace of Christ? How come, I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into that grace of Christ unto another gospel."

So the Apostle Paul refers to that work of God. He does not refer to the work of men, he doesn't say, "You believed in him and you have chosen him and you were first." He says "God was first and he called you and he called you as a sinner, he called you as an enemy. He was first and now is this your thankfulness? Have you forgotten that grace? The Lord called you into not standing before the grace and lingering before the grace. No, he called you into the grace of Christ. He washed you, he cleansed you, he renewed you. He has given you life in your soul. It was a new birth and a new heart. He called you into that grace.

Do you give glory, can you give glory for that fact? Did he call you into that grace? Did he draw you with irresistible power in a course of love, into that grace and you enjoyed it so profoundly it was your life, your soul's life and your soul's joy when you saw the grace of Christ, that you could come without money and without price, without paying a dime, just for free? He called you into the grace of Christ the Savior.

"Called you into the grace of Christ." That also speaks of unity and connection. He called into that grace so you become one with him. So why is it, how is that possible being a child of God, having enjoyed that grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, having received that only hope and only comfort and now this? How is that possible?

"I marvel that ye are so soon," even, "removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ." Here you see, congregation, how foolish God's people still are, that John Bunyan is right by indicating that Christian is straying so often, losing his scroll and taking the wrong turn and having to come back and ending up in the Castle of Despair, and you name it.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another," unto another, "gospel." Another gospel, really? Is there another gospel? Not really but it sometimes looks like, sometimes feels like. And compare that to this text, 2 Corinthians 11:4, that's even stronger, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." Another Jesus. Another Spirit. Another gospel. That's Satan. Satan often comes on his wooden shoes, the old people said, you hear him coming from miles afar, and sometimes he comes on his slippers or on his socks. Martin Luther also wrote a commentary on Galatians and, by the way, John Bunyan wrote that commentary and he speaks about a black and a white devil. That's kind of interesting, isn't it? Sometimes the devil looks like black and sometimes he's white and comes as an angel of light, and he comes with another gospel and another Jesus and another Spirit. Yes, he comes with a gospel, yes, he comes with Christ sometimes, yes, he comes with a Spirit that's confusing, but he does. He knows how to infiltrate into the church and preach another gospel and another Jesus and another Spirit and confuse the people. He loves that, that people deceive themselves and if possible if the very elect. That can't be but he tries hard to even confuse the living church, bringing them to another gospel. "But I fear," the apostle writes in 2 Corinthians 11 as well, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." So count on that, that not only in other churches, also in our church, Satan is doing his best to confuse us with another gospel, with another Jesus, and with another Spirit, and not only among the unconverted, among God's people.

So soon removed from the grace of Christ, have been called into. Really? God's people? Yes, that's what it says. You know, I preached last week about the first verses and I thought this week, "What did I begin? Now I have to continue in Galatians. I kind of promised." So now I cannot choose anymore what to preach about. Now I have to obey myself and preach what it says. This is what it is. I didn't think about this, but I have to

preach there is another gospel but there isn't, but do you know what I mean another gospel, another Jesus, another Spirit? And in what sense?

"Which is not another," verse 7. Which is not another, meaning there is no other gospel. There is a diluted gospel, there is a gospel mixed with other things but that's not the real gospel anymore. That's false. That's watered down. That is mixed with the law.

You know, have you heard of post-modernism? Maybe not, but post-modernism is the way of thinking of today's world and culture, not modern but post-modern, after, post means after. So after the times of modern thinking, kind of liberal thinking, now we have post-modern thinking. What does that mean? Post-modern thinking is not just modern but it is this, you may think it your way and I think it my way. The truth is flexible. There is not just one truth. If something is true for you, fine, but that's not true for me. Just leave me alone. I leave you alone, you leave me alone. You can't say there's only one truth, then I'm right and you're wrong. No, in post-modernism you say, "I'm right and you can be right too," even if it is completely different.

So the Apostle Paul says, "No way. There's one gospel and there is no other gospel. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ he called you into by his grace, and that's the only truth. There's nothing else. It excludes every way of salvation. Everyone else is deceiving himself. Everyone is wrong and this is right."

"Which is not another." And by the way, would you like another gospel? Why would you? Is there a better gospel? A sweeter gospel? A more important gospel? What's lacking in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? It's the best gospel. So the Apostle Paul is defending that, saying, "This is the only, best, precious gospel and Satan is attacking but we defend ourselves."

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you." He feels sorry for God's people in the Galatian churches because they have been called into the grace of Christ and now they are removed by Satan. Removed by Satan. They are responsible as well, right? Yes, they're responsible as well but yet he's mild and he says, "some trouble you. Let not your heart be troubled." That does not mean emotional or something. No. That does not mean you're crying. No, trouble means in the old meaning of the word, it means confused. And the Apostle Paul, he did not write the congregation off. He did not say, "You're all lost. You all are mistaken. You are on the wrong path. You're all going to hell." He doesn't say that. No, he says, "You're off the path and some trouble you. I feel sorry. I marvel how you can be so soon removed from that grace, that some are troubling you."

In what sense are they troubling? Well, they are troubling, as I said, by introducing the Jewish laws, the ceremonial law. Remember the ceremonial law about holy places and holy people and holy times and holy actions, all those sacrifices and circumcision especially? So they said to those Christians in Galatia, "You have to be circumcised otherwise you're not a real Christian. You need more than only Christ." And the Apostle Paul is upset about that because the ceremonial law was fulfilled by the death of Christ.

When the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, remember, the Lord Jesus' death started the abolition of the ceremonial law and having the ceremonial law back means going back to the old dispensation, meaning that the law is not fulfilled.

Look at chapter 4, verse 6. In chapter 4, verse 6, he says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Do you see that? So he's talking about the Galatians are sons and that God has sent his Spirit in their hearts. So they are God's people, no doubt about it. They're God's people but yet troubled and not really straight in the doctrine anymore. They know better because they were called unto the grace of Christ but they are now in favor of a gospel plus, a gospel with some extra, a gospel with some ceremonial law on top of that.

So they are perverting the gospel of Christ and will pervert the gospel of Christ. Now the word "pervert" in Greek, in the original means changing direction. So you go to the left and then you pervert it, you reverse it to the other side. Or something upside down. That's the word. So they pervert and damage the gospel of Christ because in the gospel of Christ it's Christ only and nothing else saves you. No similar law, no qualifications, no additions, it's Christ only. Don't let it trouble you. Don't let it pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So how would that be applied today? How can in today's church the gospel be perverted and the gospel being darkened? I will give you a few points on that and there are way more. Just a few.

A gospel without Christ. A gospel without Christ. You have a text, you are emotional, you find a beautiful word in the Bible as a sermon has spoken to you, and you feel lifted up and you feel happy and you feel overwhelmed with God's nearness and there's Christ, there's Christ, that's another gospel and there is no other gospel. You need to be called into the grace of Christ.

Or think of a gospel only with your head, making a mental decision, a mental choice to believe in something, you just force yourself and you just make a mental choice but believing is with the heart, called into.

Or a gospel of trying hard to believe. Are you trying hard to believe? What if someone would ask you, "Do you believe in me?" And you would say, "I'm trying to." And so people are trying to believe in Jesus, they really do their best. Nonsense. That's not the true faith to try to believe.

The gospel for good people, right? Behaving, going to church, reading their Bible, doing Bible study, doing their utmost and just they perform so well, they really look like Christians. Very nice, good, Christian, well-behaving people but that's not the gospel.

The gospel for people that earn by believing, that qualify by believing. They believe and with their believing they earn some points, the Lord says, "I see you believe in me, I save you because of your faith." That's perverting the gospel of Christ.

Believing as a work, believing as an effort, believing as doing your best is similar to that but the Lord says, "Him that worketh not but believeth in him that justify the ungodly." So if believing is doing something yourself, that's perverting the gospel of Christ.

Or a gospel only for the elect. A gospel only for the elect so I can preach the gospel to all of you, I just hope that someone is chosen and the Lord brings that to them because I don't really have a gospel preaching and a gospel message to the entire congregation, the entire world, it's only for the elect and the elect are called. The elect, the Lord says, "Are you a chosen one? Just try to find out if you're a chosen one. You can find out with certain marks and if you have those marks, you're elect and you have permission to believe." That's accursed gospel.

Or the gospel for them that have been broken-hearted enough. I said enough. Of course, there is a gospel to the broken-hearted ones and the Lord makes broken-hearted, and the Lord empties people of self-righteousness. That's how he works but God's people never have the feeling, I hope, that it's enough. And if you have the feeling, "I have enough brokenness, I have really a good feeling about my own brokenness," you're perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came to seek sinners, lost sinners. Do you know what I mean? Lost sinners.

"Some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Christ fulfilled the law and Christ obeyed the law himself, and therefore the gospel is by Christ only so that you have nothing left but him. And like that expression in the form for the Lord's Supper, that we are in the midst of death and seek our salvation outside of self in another, that's how the Lord works and that is the pure gospel.

Verse 8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you."

Congregation, the apostle uses very strong language. He says, "Listen to this, this is the truth, this is the only gospel, even if an angel from heaven would appear, don't believe him. Even if I would change my mind and would preach to you something else, don't believe me." He's so convinced, "This is the truth."

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Anathema, that's let him be separated from God. Harsh words not to God's people, harsh words not to the congregation but harsh words to those that trouble you, that pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ and put obstacles up or water things down. He is really beside himself in holy indignation. Twice "accursed, accursed." He says it double so that's how deep this runs.

So we also reason for indignation and to be really upset if we hear that some trouble you and add something to Christ and pervert the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ one way or another. There are thousands of ways of doing that. You know, Satan keeps attacking the church and if he cannot attack the church with persecutions from the outside, he comes

inside and comes as a mole inside the church and perverts and changes and waters down the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Accursed. And he repeats himself in verse 9, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received." So we have preached it and you have received it. Do you see the difference between 8 and 9? Which we have preached and that you have received. If there is another gospel than what I have preached and that what you have received, let him be accursed.

So he is confident to we preach the pure gospel. "I preached that unto you." But he's also convinced they received it. It was received. It was welcomed. It was accepted. By God's grace, welcomed. They have received it. He came to his own people and they received him not but they received him. Have you received him?

They that gladly received his word were baptized. Think of Pentecost. They were pricked in their hearts. The Apostle Paul preached the gospel unto them, right, and they that gladly received. Have you ever gladly received that gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with your whole heart? And now some are troubling you? And now Satan is attacking you? You don't have enough this, you do not have enough that and you're in times of darkness again? How you are so soon removed from that grace he called you into?

See how practical and yet it's also very serious for them that are unconverted, right? They are unconverted. I read in 1 Corinthians 16:22 also something about that anathema that is not translated, by the way, into "accursed." Sometimes our translators translated anathema in "accursed" and sometimes they didn't translate it and just wrote it down anathema. 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Come, Lord Jesus. So do you see that? The Apostle Paul, he is proclaiming, pronouncing the curse on those false teachers. "Accursed you who trouble and pervert the gospel." He does not curse God's people in the congregation. They are sons of God. They are off the path and they have to be brought back to the path but in 1 Corinthians 16 he talks to them that are unconverted, that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, have no new heart, no hunger for God, no thirsting for Christ.

They missed that life and the Apostle Paul doesn't say, "Well, that's too bad. Just ask for it." He doesn't say that. He says, "If you don't love him, you are accursed, then I pronounce you dead and you're on the wrong track, and it's your own fault. You don't love, you don't believe in him." It's your choice because we have no free will, right, but we have a will. We have no free will, right, we have a will. That will is not free but it really wills and it does not will God, and it does not want Christ. That's our perverted will. You see, we're all fallen in Adam and the Lord will say in hell, "This is what you willed. This is what you have chosen not only in paradise but also repeatedly yourself. You did not want." And then to be together with all the false teachers, and then to be together with all those people that have ever mistaken, have deceived themselves, be with them, be with that same people as you have condemned, they have a false doctrine, you are with that people separated from God and with all the deceivers and all the idolaters



and all the liars, and then pulling the hairs of your head and saying, "I did not want. I perverted the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ myself."

What are the lessons? You know, it happened quickly, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed." Every congregation is vulnerable for all types of influences from the right and from the left. All types of influences. We simply are gullible and that's why the Lord said, "I want every congregation to have elders and pastors and deacons because there is such cunning craftiness, so much slate of men, so much deceit." And we have to be aware of that and pray, "Lord, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil," because Satan does not sit still. He comes as a white angel perverting the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what way.

So that means critical of yourself, even critical if you may profess grace, and maybe you have grace, maybe you deceive yourself, it's also possible, but maybe you have grace, and even if you have grace, you can still be off the path, you can still be erring. So keep in mind even God's people can be wrong and still God's people, right? They were wrong, they were troubling them. "How are you so soon removed?" They were God's people. So also be careful with criticizing others, "They cannot be a child of God because he said...." Be careful. If something is blatantly against the Bible, of course.

And pray for the ministers that they won't trouble you, and that they won't pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ, and won't deceive you, and won't be an obstacle to you, and won't hold you back from Christ. That's also possible that preachers hold you back from Christ. Stop. No, not for you.

Accursed, quite something. Last thing, Galatians 3:13. The apostle still in Galatians, right, Galatians 3? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." So every sin, every sin is worthy of the curse so therefore we need someone who was cursed and accursed and he was on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ. Congregation, you don't need to qualify. You don't need to qualify. I know only they will go that are drawn. I know that. I know beneath people won't go. I know that but I have to say this, the door is wide open and we are not going to pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came to seek and to save them that are lost.