

GAL 3



((GAL 1:1-9))

PRAY

I have titled this section of instruction...(as well as the rest of what we find in chapter one)...

GOSPEL BOMBS

And that b/c what we find in this CHAPTER is JUST THAT...

They are BOMBSHELL TRUTHS about the GOSPEL meant to BLAST AWAY any and all of THE obstacles in the thinking of the GALATIANS which were currently IMPEDING their ABILITY NOT only to possess the correct/true/sound GOSPEL but also the benefits of JUSTIFICATION and SALVATION it offers.

And since (I as mentioned last week) THAT this is what I believe to be the over-arching theme of the BOOK ("A Polemic on NT Justification") THIS (as Paul's starting place) fits very nicely---since you CAN'T effectively PENETRATE the "bunker" of any ISSUE (including Justification) UNTIL you have first CRACKED OPEN the GROUND in which it resides---and that GROUND is the GOSPEL.

AND so that is what PAUL does...

With purposed PRECISION he DROPS several gospel bombs ONTO the landscape of the GALATIANS' thinking in the hopes of blasting away the obstacles which stand in the way of them getting NOT only the GOSPEL ---but (also) penetrating the FORTIFIED bunker of JUSTIFICATION---a bunker (and place) in their thinking WHICH NEEDED to be both penetrated and CHANGED.

And I think as we move through these over the next two weeks—you will FIND that they are TRUTHS which as much of a bombshell (today) as they assuredly were in Paul's day.

I HOPE (however) what you will ALSO FIND FRESH encouragement and appreciation for WHY we (here) AT DSC don't take the GOSPEL or our study of it LIGHTLY (b/c it is based largely on the truths we are going to learn here today).

SO w/ that (then) HERE is the first GOSPEL BOMB.

1. The gospel and its justification are only effectual for those who correctly understand it.

(3-6a-of Christ")

- 1.1. "grace to you and peace from God the Father" = unmerited favor (grace) and the absence of wrath (peace)—those are the two things being offered "from God the Father" to "you" (the Galatians—or more importantly—those who are not Jews—nor bearing the identity markers of a Jew such as circumcision). And when you put those things together (an offer of unmerited favor and the absence of wrath) what you essentially get is the good news (i.e. gospel) message (a message of grace and peace to you!). This message (however) is NOT complete without mention of Jesus Christ---which is why Paul includes Him as well (along with an explanation of what He specifically did to make it possible) (3-4).
- 1.2. In saying this THOUGH, (I believe) that what Paul has done (here) is more significant than we tend to realize upon our initial reading of these verses.
- 1.3. The motive for Paul (I believe) is not some form of honorable mention (in relation to Jesus and His death for sins) but rather as the SPECIFIC MEANS to IDENTIFY the CORRECT/TRUE/SOUND gospel—especially as it relates to the ISSUE of JUSTIFICATION (the heart of the GOSPEL and key to receiving God's grace and peace in salvation).
- 1.4. This "grace and peace" which HAD BEEN (and was again being offered) to the Galatians---to non-Jews---to unclean Gentiles WAS "grace and peace" exclusively through the JUSTIFYING (sin forgiving) WORK (of its other sponsor) —"the Lord Jesus Christ"—"who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" ...WHO ALSO (according to VERSE 1) had been "raised from the dead" (the sign according to Romans 4:25 that He had indeed secured justification through his death).
- 1.5. IOW: THE GOSPEL OFFER (from GOD) was an offer to be JUSTIFIED through the PERSON and WORK of JESUS CHRIST alone.
- 1.6. Why this is relevant = B/C (As previously discussed) the Galatians were rejecting such truths and (instead) buying into the idea that the gospel and its justification could only GAINED by those willing to not only put faith in Christ's sacrifice (but also) observe the OC clean laws (or circumcision, etc.).

IOW: it was more than just the “grace and peace” offered by God and Jesus through His death and resurrection that a person needed in order to receive a justified standing and right relationship w/God.

- 1.7. Which means they were (also) rejecting God’s will and glory--which is why Paul explicitly says what he does at the end of verse 4 and into verse 5 (4-5).
- 1.8. The end result of such thinking = (6)
- 1.9. “deserting” = To leave behind/reject as a possession or possibility---In this case it is God and His gospel calling “in the grace of Christ” (alone). By their acceptance of this different gospel (one which required the observance of the OC clean laws also) they were leaving behind/rejecting the correct/true/sound gospel---and therefore also the justification (only it could provide).
- 1.10. What this establishes for us (then) is (this first gospel bomb) = The gospel and its justification are only effectual for those who correctly understand it. (IOW): IF you don’t get the GOSPEL right, you can’t be RIGHT w/GOD! And that no matter HOW BAD you may want to be. Believing the wrong things about the GOSPEL equates to the same thing as NOT having the GOSPEL at all---which (in turn) means NO justification, no salvation and no relationship with GOD. AN incorrect understanding or unwillingness to submit to the correct/true/sound GOSPEL is therefore the same as an OUTRIGHT rejection of GOD.
- 1.11. Paul (here) makes no bones about it: the only way GOD’S GOSPEL good news of JUSTIFICATION would be effectual for them is IF they were understanding and submitting to it correctly--- EVERYTHING else was “desertion”(1:6) --or as he states in (5:4) a “fall from grace”.
- 1.12. This must have been a huge shocker to the Galatians who I’m sure did not see their actions as that bad (or dangerous). (“It isn’t like we are throwing out the need for Christ for Justification—we are just saying that we think these other things are needed also. And if they are not, no big deal—we still have Christ.”).
- 1.13. Any deviation from the biblical formula (however) is not allowed. Which means that though the availability of the GOSPEL IS no longer limited “sociologically” (i.e. to ONE people group, the Jews since it was now offered to non-Jews as well (“grace to **you!**”), THOUGH that was the case, was it was nonetheless STILL LIMITED “theologically”. IF your understanding or submission to the GOSPEL was wrong—then it will NOT benefit you at all (either in this life—or the life to come). You will be no different God-rejecting pagan (and that again) NO MATTER how you feel about it (b/c you have-by such wrong thinking “deserted” GOD.
- 1.14. Further support (for this first bombshell gospel truth) = The gospel will be ineffectual for those:

- 1.14.1. Who get the gospel wrong in re: to the Person of Christ: (1Jo 2:22-23) = Arianism and Modalism: Mormonism, JW's (deity) and Oneness Pentecostals (distinct personhood), (1Jo 4:1-3) = Docetism ("to appear"): Christian Scientists (Mary Eddy Baker saw the physical world as simply an illusion).
- 1.14.2. Who get the gospel wrong in re: to maintaining our justification (so not just how we gain it—which is the key problem in the wrong gospel being embraced by the Galatians—but also the need to maintain it---some reject this as well and as a result have a gospel that will prove to be ineffectual come j-day): (Jud 1:3-4; 2Pe 2:1-2; 1Jo 2:24-29) = Antinomianism: The majority of Evangelical Christianity today!
- 1.15. Point Not To Miss = God's has zero tolerance when it comes to the GOSPEL. (IOW): He is not "grading on a curve" or taking our background, upbringing, church history or feelings into consideration! Either you get it 100% right—or you are identified as one who has "deserted" Him (just as the Galatians). This (btw) demands that the GOSPEL is something that can be known correctly (otherwise God would be unjust).
- 1.16. Which means practically-speaking = We can't be lazy, or sloppy or apathetic about the GOSPEL and how we understand it. We must MAKE SURE that we are getting it right (IOW: We must have **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ERROR IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL**) ---(otherwise) all we are doing is adding ourselves to that awful line in Mat 7—aline filled w/ people who got it wrong! (This is why then God says what He does in (Jer 29:13) and why Paul says what he does to Timothy in (1Ti 4:16).

The blast-radius of this first bombshell truth is expanded further in the dropping of Paul's 2nd bomb—which is essentially JUST the logical conclusion to the first...

2. There are NOT different or optional versions of the gospel which are acceptable to God, but instead one correct/true/sound gospel and many false gospels.

2.1. (6-7)

- 2.2. The ESV's wording of this phrase "not that there is another one" is identical to how it reads in the Greek and further establishes the exclusivity of the gospel (and the availability or effectiveness of its benefits). There is ONLY ONE which is the real deal and works! This (btw) is another place where the ESV's translation is far superior to that of the NAS. The NAS reads (instead), "which is *really* not another"---a phrase which doesn't necessarily communicate exclusivity—only that what the Galatians were possessing was NOT legitimate. Yet that is not what Paul is communicating. He is literally saying THERE ARE NO OTHER GOSPELS!
- 2.3. This is why (also) then Paul can speak of them as "deserting" God. Since there are no other versions of the gospel which are acceptable to God—to embrace another is (essentially) the same thing as a person who changes from one religion to another—by doing so they are also changing from one god to another (since the religion of each is exclusive to them. To go from Christianity to Islam means also to change from the God of the Bible (Yaweh) to the God of the Koran (Allah). And this (again) was the extent of the crime being committed by the Galatians who were embracing this "different gospel" which had presented to them: they were changing not only the gospel—but ultimately their GOD (since once MORE) there is only ONE GOSPEL (which we can embrace) which will cause HIM to embrace us.
- 2.4. This (btw) is what makes idolatry the most frequent sin in the Bible: b/c God is always tied to His message—people can be guilty of idolatry (the embracing of a false God) not only by directly replacing God w/ a different god—but also by replacing His message w/ a different message (This is why also John ends his diatribe against the different gospel messages and understanding he addresses in his first epistle w/ "little children keep yourselves from idols" b/c this is what the embracing of all such messages and understandings was producing—the sin of embracing idolatry).
- 2.5. Why it is important for us to hear what Paul is saying to the Galatians as though he were saying it to us = B/C many so called Christians (esp. today) tend to think there is MORE the one gospel—or optional versions which are acceptable to GOD!
- 2.6. Support (that this is indeed happening today):
- 2.6.1. ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together) and other groups (ex. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) who accept one another as Christian brothers and sisters yet whose gospels are diametrically opposed to each other.

- 2.6.2. Christians using statements like, “we’ll have to agree to disagree” on issues related to the gospel. (ex. Bill recently was discussing issues related to the Gospel w/ a woman we have known for several years who we used to go to church with—and this is how she responded to him). Such statements (again) imply that there (at the very least) different gospels or versions of the gospel which (though may not be acceptable to us) will be to God.
- 2.7. What was actually taking place in Galatia (that is still true today) = (7) = NOT other legitimate versions of the gospel BUT distortions (false, perverted or disproportionate versions) of the correct/true/sound gospel (i.e. “the gospel of Christ”).
- 2.8. What you get when the correct/true/sound gospel has been distorted (i.e. given a false, perverted or disproportionate meaning) = A FALSE GOSPEL!
- 2.9. This (then) is what was happening among the Galatian churches. The correct/true/sound gospel was being replaced w/that which was a FALSE GOSPEL. And as was established in the FIRST bombshell truth---anything less than the correct/true sound gospel as that which we understand and are embracing MEANS (also) something less than JUSTIFICATION (or salvation)—FAR LESS! It means HELL!
- 2.10. The result of putting the previous bombshell truth of “we must get it right” together w/ this bombshell truth of “there is only one which is right” = We must have **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR THOSE WHO WOULD TEACH SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE CORRECT/TRUE/SOUND GOSPEL** (IOW: There is no place for “agree to disagree”) nor acting as though such individuals are OUR Christian brothers and sisters.

And if you think that is harsh—then consider the 3rd bombshell truth regarding the gospel established by Paul which is...

- 3. We should harshly condemn all who distort the correct, true/sound gospel no matter who they are.**
- 3.1. (8-9)

- 3.2. “even if we or an angel from heaven (if anyone) should preach to you a gospel (which is) contrary...”
 =Besides flatly condemning all who preach a contrary gospel (i.e. a gospel which distorts the correct/true/sound gospel), what Paul is (ml) also doing here is taking a pretty serious jab at Peter (and possibly) James whom he knew was most responsible for the propagation of the false gospel message the Galatians were starting to embrace. Paul is making it clear that this won’t serve as an excuse come judgment day---nor will it stand as a means of validation. Apostle, angel or otherwise, preaching a distorted gospel will damn you and those who embrace it no matter who they are!
- 3.3. “accursed” = damned by God to eternal Hell.
- 3.4. If we are tempted to think that Paul’s attitude (here) is the exception rather than the rule consider the following 4 reasons as support for this bombshell truth (that we too should harshly condemn such individuals as well):
- 3.4.1. (one) this was Jesus’ attitude toward people leading others astray through false gospels was the same as Paul’s (Luk 11:52; Mat 23:15).
- 3.4.2. (two) all Scripture is to be viewed as instructive to our own lives (Rom 15:4; 1Co 10:1-6).
- 3.4.3. (three) Paul calls us to be imitators of himself (as well as Christ) (1Co 11:1).
- 3.4.4. (four) Scripture explicitly commands it (Tit 1:13). (*finally then...*)
- 3.5. Why this gospel bombshell is important NOT to miss:
- 3.5.1. b/c what God commands we will be judged based upon (esp. issues related to separation) (Mat 10:32-39; 2Jo 1:9-11).
- 3.5.2. b/c this sb the single greatest determiner of where we go to church (since this is what makes a church a false church: preaching a false/distorted gospel).
- 3.5.3. b/c so many w/in Evangelical Christianity today are validating the gospel they embrace (as true) based on men not Scripture (IOW: their confidence that they have the right gospel is b/c it is the same gospel as their favorite “super-preachers”, theology teachers or gospel club/coalition. Josh and I get this all the time from those we attempt to discuss the gospel w/). These people are failing to heed Paul’s words here in Gal 1:8-9 (“if ANYONE preaches a contrary gospel...”). We must be careful not to fall into the same dangerous trap (a trap which seems to be built on the mantra: “since the Reformation—or—as long as we follow the Reformation-- no-one can get the gospel wrong.”).

Well that brings us to the end of our study-time this morning---BUT it also RAISES a very important question, “How do we make sure that we are getting the Gospel right----that we have the correct/true/sound GOSPEL?”

So much talk TODAY about things THAT could be ALL fit into the CATEGORY of “WHAT happens when we don’t GET the GOSPEL RIGHT” makes ONE WONDER –“HOW do I make sure?”

And (fortunately) FOR US that is where we are going NEXT WEEK as we finish our STUDY of chapter ONE—and PAUL’S GOSPEL BOMBS---truths (about the gospel) WHICH were meant to prepare (not only the Galatians but US as well) to RECEIVE what will be said in the later chapters by BLASTING AWAY any obstacles in our thinking THAT might otherwise GET in the way (and therefore keep US from this most precious thing—the SOUND GOSPEL.

So be (here) next week as we continue (then) our study of chapter ONE and GOSPEL BOMBS.

LET’S PRAY