

## Study 2

### Galatians 1:6-24

1. What is Paul being accused of by the false teachers of Galatia? How does Paul defend himself?

Paul is accused by false teachers of reconstructing the gospel in order to please man, by preaching an incomplete version of Christianity that disregards the necessity of following the Jewish law, given Christianity's roots in Judaism (Galatians 1:10).

Paul defends himself by asserting that the gospel he preached did not originate from human teaching but was revealed directly by Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12). He supports this claim by recounting his former life as a zealous persecutor of the church, which demonstrates that he could not have crafted a gospel designed to please people (Galatians 1:13-14).

2. What is the difference between the Christian gospel and other religions like Buddhism? Why is it that Christians always have to refer to the Bible? Why does this make sense?

The Christian gospel is unique because it centers on God's grace and the finished work of Christ for salvation, rather than human effort or enlightenment (Galatians 1:16). Unlike man-made religions, the gospel proclaims the necessity of Christ's sacrificial death to save humanity—a concept that is divine in origin and unparalleled in other belief systems.

Other religions, like Buddhism, emphasize human striving to achieve spiritual goals through personal discipline, moral effort, or enlightenment. In contrast, the Christian gospel emphasizes dependence on God's initiative and grace.

Christians refer to the Bible because it is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and serves as the ultimate authority for understanding salvation, faith, and life. This reliance makes sense because the Bible reveals God's redemptive plan, fulfilled in Christ, and provides an unchanging and trustworthy foundation for faith across all generations.

3. How did Paul refute his critics and defend his contention that it was he who had the gospel of God and not his critics?

Paul refuted his critics by recounting his radical transformation. He explains that he was a zealous persecutor of the church, but God revealed His Son to him and called him by grace (Galatians 1:13-16). This demonstrates that his gospel was not taught or influenced by human sources.

Furthermore, Paul emphasizes that after his conversion, he did not immediately consult with other apostles but went to Arabia, underscoring the independence of his divine commission (Galatians 1:17).

4. Look at Galatians 1:10 and discuss what is the main motivation for anyone to preach an alternative gospel than the one Paul originally preached. Look at Galatians 4:17 and 6:11-13. Do you see this happening in modern-day churches? Give examples.

The main motivation for preaching an alternative gospel is often to gain human approval or control over others (Galatians 1:10, 4:17). Paul notes that false teachers sought to boast in outward conformity to the law (Galatians 6:11-13) rather than true faith in Christ. Today, we see similar distortions in prosperity theology, which prioritizes material wealth, or in legalistic churches that emphasize rule-keeping over the gospel's grace. Both prioritize human achievement or approval over the cross of Christ. All these distortions have added human effort plus the work of Christ. The Roman Catholics have insisted it is not salvation by faith alone but by works and faith.

5. Look at this portion of the correspondence course from the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist church and can you see what they are advocating? Is this a Gospel 2.0?

*"Do you want to be a Christian?... The steps to Christ are few and plain and easy to understand, and we will turn to God's Guidebook now for information. ... **Believe**; that's the first step toward becoming a Christian. ... the second step is **repentance** ... repentance is simply being sorry for our sins and putting them away ... the next step in becoming a Christian is **confession** ... real repentance and confession mean not only to stop sinning, but to do everything possible to make past wrongs right ... The next step is **baptism**, and the proof for that is found in **Acts 2:38-39** ... Fifth, **obedience through Christ in us** ... So we have clearly outlined the steps that we need to take in order to become a Christian: to believe in God, to repent of and to confess our sins, to be baptized, AND TO OBEY ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD. ... He may stumble and fall, but he gets up and presses forward again, determined to overcome by God's enabling power. Such a fall is not counted against him when he repents and asks forgiveness and divine help to live the right life" (New Life Voice of Prophecy Guide, #12)  
[https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a\\_warning\\_about\\_seventh\\_day\\_adventism.html](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/a_warning_about_seventh_day_adventism.html)*

The gospel is not that we are saved through a grace that produces the works of the law. The Good News is that we are saved by God's grace alone through faith alone WITHOUT THE LAW. All who will be saved must come on these glorious terms, trusting in the shed blood alone for full salvation.

Those who attempt to return to the Mosaic Law to perfect their salvation are committing the same error as the Galatians in the first century.

Works are the evidence of a saving faith and not part of the pre-conditions for salvation

6. What are some of the characteristics of modern-day distortions of the gospel otherwise labeled in the video as Gospel 2.0?

Modern-day distortions of the gospel often add to or subtract from the finished work of Christ. Other examples aside from the **Prosperity Gospel / Gospel of Felt Needs** include (but are not limited to):

1. **Moralistic Gospel:** Emphasizing good behavior as a requirement for salvation.
2. **Therapeutic Gospel:** Reducing the gospel to personal happiness and self-fulfillment.

These distortions shift the focus from God's grace and Christ's sufficiency to human-centered goals.

7. Can you share your experience in the churches you have been to that might have elements of a man-made gospel rather than the historical gospel of God as preached by Paul?
8. Reflection question. Why is it so tempting for people to believe in distorted gospel?

### Takeaway

The gospel is a divine revelation from God, not a man-made invention, and it proclaims the complete and redemptive work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind. It reminds us that salvation is entirely by God's grace and does not require additional actions or legalistic practices to be complete.