

## A Perverted Gospel

The church is the body of Christ which He has purchased with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**). When we obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are added to the church by the Lord (**Acts 2:47**). Jesus is the head of the church, the Savior of the body (**Ephesians 5:23**). One day Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father (**1 Corinthians 15:24**).

However, after being added to the church by the Lord, some will turn away from the teachings of Christ while claiming to be in Christ. Those who do such and those who follow them will be accursed (**Galatians 1:1-10**). Jesus discussed their situation in **Matthew 7:21-23**. John talked about those who have left their first love (**Revelation 2:4-5**).

Paul's letter to the Galatians discussed a problem facing the Lord's church. The church still faces that problem. Some were perverting the Gospel of Christ (**Galatians 1:6-7**). To pervert is to twist the meaning, to reshape the original into another form. When finished, it does not resemble the original. One of the definitions in the dictionary is: to cause to turn aside or away from what is good or true or morally right, to divert to a wrong end or purpose.

Paul clearly stated that the Gospel he preached was not according to man nor did he receive it from man (**Galatians 1:11-12**). His message was the word of God (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**). It is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**). This is the only Gospel to be preached for the salvation of man. We can understand its purity and preach it in its purity (**Galatians 1:8**).

Furthermore, this gospel that saves man from his sins can be understood by us and obeyed (**Galatians 1:9**). It was not and is not so complicated that man cannot know what God expects from us. However, we can still pervert the Gospel of Christ to our being lost eternally (**Matthew 25:41, 46**). What are some of the ways we can pervert the Gospel?

When we try to bind requirements of the Old Testament upon Christians today (**Galatians 5:4**). What was written aforetime was written for our learning (**Romans 15:4**). Once the Old Testament has been fulfilled in Christ, the requirements were also fulfilled (**Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:23-25**).

When we try to grant more freedom than the law of Christ allows (**Galatians 5:13**). When we try to use our liberty as a cloak for vice (**1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:19**). When we try to twist what the Scriptures teach (**2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2**). When we teach that the resurrection is already past (**2 Timothy 2:18**). When we try to teach as doctrines the commandments of men (**Matthew 15:7-9**).

How do we prevent this departure from the faith (**Galatians 3:1-2**)? We study to show ourselves approved and rightly dividing the word of truth (**2 Timothy 2:15**). We are to search the Scriptures daily to be sure what is being taught is true (**Acts 17:11**). We are to exhort one another while it is still call today (**2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 10:24-25**).

We are to learn not to follow cunningly devised fables (**1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Peter 1:16**). We are not to give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons (**1 Timothy 4:1**). We are not to be like those who have a form of godliness but deny its power or are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (**2 Timothy 3:5-7**). We are not to be turned away from the truth and turned aside to fables (**2 Timothy 4:4**).

We are to learn from the Scriptures so that we may have hope (**Romans 15:4**). We are to speak as the oracles of God (**1 Peter 4:11**). We are to recognize the power of the Word of God (**Hebrews 4:12**). We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 3:18**).

Something to think about!

David B. McElwain