

✓ **Astonished!**

1-21-18

Galatians 1:6–7 (ESV)

⁶ I am astonished that you are **so quickly deserting him** who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to **a different gospel**— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want **to distort the gospel** of Christ.

Christians should not be arguing with each other about the multitude of differences of opinions within the Christian faith. We find unity within the foundation of Christ's death on the cross and HIS resurrection. Often I will ask a person this question to see if they grasp the foundation of the Christian faith; "If you were standing before God in heaven right now and HE asked you, 'Why should I let you in?'" What would you tell HIM? **The answer is, "I am forgiven!"** That answer establishes that they have accepted Christ as their Savior. Any other answer establishes their false belief system.

Notice here that Paul didn't use the word "Astonished" to describe unbelievers, but believers. Paul was not astonished about the sins of the world or for that matter Paul is not astonished at the sins of some Christians or some religious leaders. Unfortunately that is never a surprise. **Paul was "astonished" that believers have distorted the gospel.** The gospel that was presented in the preceding three verses; **"The good news that Jesus rescued us from this present evil age by forgiving our sins according to the will of God."** The distortion was that they were trusting in the Law and not the free gift of God through Jesus.

Utmost Importance! The distorted gospel taught that achieving righteousness and acceptance by God was by self-effort based on the Law. Paul clearly states the issue in chapter two of Galatians.

Galatians 2:16 (ESV)

We know that a person is **not justified by works of the law** but through faith in Jesus Christ. We also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and **not by works of the law**, because **by works of the law no one will be justified.**

Astonished – Exchanging Grace for the Law!

Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And **this is not your own doing**; it is the gift of God, ⁹ **not a result of works**, so that no one may boast.

Grace is favor and power from God. Grace is what God does not what we do. **Paul is Astonished that they have traded Divine Accomplishment for Human achievement.** Salvation by works is a devastating message and distorts the free gift of God and the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Astonished, Paul has a very clear word for those who preach the message of human achievement instead of the free gift of the Grace of God. **Paul declares, “Let him be accursed!”**

Galatians 1:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, **let him be accursed**. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, **let him be accursed**.

“Let them be accursed!” The word is literally translated “eternally condemned” (*anathema*)! In spiritual terms it means damnation.

Expositor’s Commentary says, “The vehemence with which Paul denounces those who teach another gospel (literally, he says, “Let them be damned”) has bothered some commentators, as well as other readers of the letter. **But this shows how little the gospel of God’s grace is understood and appreciated and how little many Christians are concerned for the advance of biblical truth.**”

Trying to earn the acceptance of God through human achievement is being under a curse!

Galatians 3:10 (ESV)

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

Jesus ended the curse!

Romans 10:4 (ESV)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

*The next two weeks we see how to
be Holy Spirit empowered, but first*

We are required to decide! Grace or the Law!

Galatians 1:10 (ESV)

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? **If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.**

The choice of the word “slave” is interesting because this letter is about freedom. **It is an indication of the true though paradoxical teaching that real freedom is to be found in bondage—bondage to Christ!**

We must take a stand for the Grace of God (favor and power from God) therefore being “Astonish” when any believer would chose the Law. Final warning! But we often say, “They are so nice!” Beware! Satan can disguise himself as “an angel of light,” as can his ministers.

2 Corinthians 11:14–15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Satan **disguises** himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, **disguise** themselves as servants of righteousness

To stand on the foundation of Grace

Astonished BCC proclaims our verse of Grace!

2Cor.5:21 (NIV)

God made HIM who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in HIM we might become the righteousness of God.

Prophetic Team

*Hear from the Holy Spirit to change the current
situation or impact the future.*