

Title: The Devastating Danger of Desertion (Part 1)

Text: Galatians 1:6-7

Central Idea: When the Alternative to the Authentic is Anathema, Stay with the Authentic

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[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel — 7 which is not another — only there are some who are disturbing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As I have said before, I now say again: if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

[ii] Last message: No Time for Kudos

We noted that whereas P. normally begins his let. to his CH's w/words of thanksgiving/commendation (even Corinth) there's no such thing here. No words of thanks, no atta-boys / commendation.

Looking back to vv. 1-5 . . .

[iii] He gives an initial defense of his apostleship (v. 1)

1 Paul, an apostle—neither sent from men, nor the agency of man—but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead,

[iv] He adds in verse 2:

2 and all the brethren with me, to the churches of Galatia:

[v] He gives his customary introduction of wishing them grace and peace in v. 3

[vi] Preview of the Gospel in v. 4

4 who gave Himself for our sins in order that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of God our Father,

[vii] Doxology in v. 5

5 to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen!

[viii] He gets right to the point in v. 6 ==>

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel—

Sense the urgency.

[ix] What's at stake? Why is this so very urgent?

That's what Paul outlines in these 4 vv. - a section we're calling "The Devastating Danger of Desertion"

answering the ? ==>

I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?

I'll clarify what I mean by that a little later....

[x] First I want to set the stage so you understand what's happening here

If you don't understand what's happening in t/context you're apt to misunderstand how it applies today.

[xi] What was the apostle Paul's relationship to these 1st c. Christians in south Galatia?

We believe t/CHs to which these Xns belonged were est. by Paul during his 1st M.J. recorded in Acts 13-14.

It was t/CH in t/city of Antioch in Syria (n. of Jer.) that sent Paul & an early Xn leader named Barnabas on a mission trip west t/o Asia Min. (Turkey)

Paul and Barn. went to Cyprus & from Cyprus to t/cities of southern Galatia.

Custom = locate a Jewish synagogue in each town and begin to proclaim X there. T/Jews weren't receptive to t/message, so they turned their attention to t/Gentiles who were.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard [the Gospel], they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Revival. CHs were est. in places like Lystra, Iconium, Derbe; in that lower central region we call southern / provincial Gal.

[xii] Paul and Barnabas were itinerants

They would est. a CH & then have to move on.

They would do their best to install qualif. leaders in t/CHs, & they would write to them & even visit when they could, but they couldn't stay.

Concluded their missionary trip by returning to where they departed: Antioch in Syria.

It was in t/wake of their absence that these fledgling CH's were most vulnerable.

Later, TAP would warn t/pastors at Ephesus (Acts 20) ==>
28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among
which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd
the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.
29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come
in among you, not sparing the flock;

**[xiii] Same thing happened here in Galatia – only much
more quickly**

**6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him
who called you by the grace of Christ for a different
gospel—**

It had only been a year or so since TAP had planted these
CH's. In that short span of mos. they were abandoning
t/Gospel of Grace in JC for a Gospel of Judaizing works.

1 of t/laws of our fallen world is that it takes much longer to
build things up than it does to take them down.

Took years of planning & building to construct t/WTTs; only
hours to bring them down. What's true of buildings made of
stone & steel also holds for those that are spiritual in nature.

16th c. Father of t/Reformation ML recog. that in his day==>
A man labors for a decade before he succeeds in training his
little church into orderly religion, and then some ignorant
and vicious poltroon (coward) comes along to overthrow in a
minute the patient labor of years. By the grace of God we
have effected here in Wittenberg the form of a Christian
church. The Word of God is taught as it should be, the
sacraments are administered, and everything is prosperous.
This happy condition, secured by many years of arduous

labors, some lunatic might spoil in a moment. . . . The church is a tender plant. It must be watched. People hear a couple of sermons, scan a few pages of Holy Writ, and think they know it all. They are bold because they have never gone through any trials of faith. Void of the Holy Spirit, they teach what they please as long as it sounds good to the common people who are ever ready to join something new.

His advice in this instance ==>

We have to watch out for the devil lest he sow tares among the wheat while we sleep.

That's what happened in Galatia.

The devil was busy sowing tares among t/wheat.

[xiv] These “poltroons” as Luther would call them were the Judaizers

They were those that prompted t/Jer. Council we read about in Acts 15

1 . . . men . . . from Judea [who] began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Likely t/same ones Paul refers to in Galatians 2:12 calling them t/party of t/circum.

We get our Eng. “Judaizer” from a single word in Gal. 2:14 $\iota\omicron\upsilon\delta\alpha\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ (to live as a Jew according to the customs).

Something Ignatius, t/Apostolic Father who wrote at t/turn of t/2d c. called “absurd” (for a Xn to live as a Jew).

That was in his “Letter to the Magnesians” written around AD 100 (Magnesia was in Asia Minor just s. of Ephesus)

Josephus recognized t/Judaizers in his day distinguishing them from t/rest of t/Jews who laid no claim upon X.

This was t/1st heretical sub-Xn group.

Today we have Mormons & Jehovah's Witnesses; then they had t/Judaizers.

They were Jewish nationalists who claimed to follow X but taught that t/Mosaic Law was mandatory for Jew and Gentile alike. They saw themselves as superior to non-Jews, prompting Paul to later write (3:28) ==>

There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Pardon t/expression – but if t/Jud. had a badge of honor it was t/foreskin, as circumcision was t/epitome for them of what it meant to be under t/covenant & to keep t/M.L.

That's was central to their message ==>

Acts 15:1 “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Paul's response?

Gal. 5:2–4 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

In Phil. 3 – Paul calls them “t/false circumcision” (true circumcision is of t/heart. It's spiritual, regardless of gender). Cf. Phil. 3:3.

In t/case of t/Gal. CH's – there was a single powerful leader that was at the forefront ==>

5:10 . . . the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

[xv] Brings us back to our text . . .

We might sum up these 4 vv. ==>

When the Alternative to the Authentic is Anathema, Stay with the Authentic

Answering t/? ==>

I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?

Clarify . . .

“Desertion”

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel –

“Devastatingly Dangerous”

Word “Anathema” (accursed) used 2x – 1 ea. in vv. 8&9.

“Dancing”

Because t/Galatian Xns were flirting (dancing) w/a false gspl

But Paul was confident that, thru t/min. of t/Word & t/Spirit they would reaffirm their belief in t/truth (5:10).

Word translated “deserting” in v. 6 is a PT verb ind. that when Paul wrote, their defection was only in t/initial stage.

Had he used t/aorist that would indicate that it was final.

Cf. 1 Thess. 1:9 (aorist “turned” to G. from their idolatry).

[xvi] To “Dance with Desertion” is to Flirt with Apostasy

What's A? Comes from a Gk noun ἀποστασία.

“defiance of established system or authority, rebellion, abandonment, breach of faith” [BAG]

2 Thess. 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [day of the Lord] will not come unless the apostasy comes first ...

[xviii] **The word ἀποστασία is only used 2 times in t/N.T.**
But t/danger of defection from t/faith once for all deliv. to t/saints is a warning repeated in t/Bible

1 Timothy 4:1 refers to such apostasy ==>
BUT the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

It's to fall away from THE FAITH // embrace deceitful spirits and demonic doctrine.

It's a topic we covered in both 2 Peter and Jude.
2 Peter 2:1–2 1 BUT false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

Jude 3b–4 . . . 3b I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Apostasy is a defection from t/truth of the faith.

[xix] An apostate is someone who professes an orthodox belief in Christ who later goes on to reject that belief

That can happen lots of different ways.

Some leave t/faith by becoming apathetic // atheist or agnostic // by adopting a lifestyle at odds w/the Xn faith (homosexuality) // by embracing a false Gospel – t/danger t/Galatians were flirting with.

Regardless of how – all apostates give evidence they were never regenerate in t/first place.

[xx] Here's the danger: No one goes from an orthodox profession to heresy and apostasy all at once

Not like I came to believe in JC as t/2 person of t/Trinity, as t/one who died on my behalf & was resurrected t/3d day, & that salv. is by grace alone, through faith alone in Him alone.

Then t/next day I just jettison all of that.

It's a process. Sometimes it's months / may be years – but it's not overnight.

Danger signs along t/way; an erosion of faith/fulness. Adopting doctrines at variance w/the historic Xn faith.

We are to beware (to “be aware”). Know t/warning signs in your own heart. “Spiritual slippage”

Writer to t/Hebrews in 3:12==>

Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.

Peter in his 2d Epistle - 1:10

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

[xxi] The warnings are real

When applied by t/Spirit to a regenerate heart they are a means of grace by which t/believer perseveres.

When applied by that same Spirit to a false professor they may be a means of grace by which that person realizes that he/she is not in t/faith & is genuinely converted.

Warnings are a powerful corrective. Esp. so when a professed believer or a CH begins to flirt with damning doctrine.

Again ==>

I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?

4 Ideas from our text (2 this week; 2 next time)

A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ

1. Note how Paul begins verse 6

6a **I am astonished** (Θαυμάζω)

a. Verb Θαυμάζω has been rendered “astonished, marveled, amazed, astounded, surprised”

Word was commonly used as a lit. device in Gk. letters to express shock or utter amazement. Pres. tense ind. continued bewilderment.

“Scratching one's head in disbelief, pondering how this can be so.”

What? ==>

6b . . . that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel—

2. “Deserting” (some translations have “turning away”) literally means “to bring to another place”

Used that way in Heb 11:5 to describe Enoch's translation from earth to heaven.

Metaphorical use to refer to someone who switched allegiances – from 1 country to another – a political traitor – a military deserter.

Years ago t/NYTs ran a story about Bowe Bergdahl, t/American soldier who was held captive by t/Taliban for 5 years and became t/object of media scrutiny following t/controversial prisoner exchange.

Times story cited a military doc. claiming that Sgt. Berg. had a history of leaving his post – this amid controversy that he may have willingly deserted out of sympathy for his Muslim foes. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/06/world/asia/bowe-bergdahl-walked-away-before-military-report-says.html>

Interestingly (what makes him such a powerful example) Bergdahl, as a youth, was raised in a Xn home. Homeschooled, he attended an OPC church w/his family in Boise, ID.

Acc. to World Mag. t/former pastor of t/Bergdahl's CH had counseled Bowe as a teenager re: his struggles with Xnty.

“He was asking questions about whether this faith was his faith or his parents’ faith...”

He went on to spend time in a Buddhist monastery b4 joining t/Army in 2008.

A year later (09) Bergdahl disappeared from his post in Afghanistan near the border with Pakistan.

His sister kept a blog which included prayers for her brother – and in a 2012 post, she wrote this prayer:

“You are my God and like no other, You alone work all things together for the good of those who obey Your commands. ... Please be with Bowe, grant him an awareness of You that heals his heart and fills him with hope! May he seek Your face and mercy and never give up. In Jesus I pray.” http://www.worldmag.com/2014/06/the_curious_case_of_bowe_bergdahl

I don’t know how that prayer was or will be ultim. answers.

The 2012 edition of the United States Manual for Courts-Martial:

Any person found guilty of desertion or attempt to desert shall be punished, if the offense is committed in time of war, by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct, but if the desertion or attempt to desert occurs at any other time, by such punishment, other than death, as a court-martial may direct.

In 1941, Joseph Stalin ordered that deserters from the Soviet army be shot on the spot.

Military desertion is serious bus. May be deadly.

Spiritual desertion is far more serious - it carries an eternal penalty.

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ . . .

1. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?

A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ
Affront to His sufficiency.

B. Because Alternate Gospels (Like Alternate Realities) Don't Exist

To embrace a diff. Gospel is to embrace a phantom, a shadow.

Paul calls it ==>

6c . . . a different gospel—

1. Different can mean just different - that's not necessarily bad is it?

After all, we have different CH's and not all of them are bad. Diff. ways to express one's worship // forms of music. Not bad, is it?

Is there such a thing as ==>

6c . . . a different gospel— ???

2. First we ask “What's the gospel?”

a. εὐαγγέλιον lit. means “good news”

Good news that answers t/? ==>

"How can a sinful man who is destined for God's wrath be forgiven and restored to peace with God so that he may worship and enjoy Him forever?"

Answer to that ? is JC. The only way to be forgiven of our sin and depravity is through faith in his sacrificial death. That is, to believe in Him as t/one suffered God's wrath in my place so that I can have His righteousness.

b. An imperfect example comes from t/death camps at Auschwitz

Early during WW2 a clergyman Maxmillan Kolba was sent there for his role in helping Jews escape Nazi persecution. While there a prisoner escaped. Rule was that should that happen, 10 prisoners would be randomly selected for execution. As t/names were called a certain Polish Jew cried out, "Wait, I have a wife and children!"

Kolba stepped forward and said, "I will take his place." It was permitted and Kolba, the innocent, died his place.

This story was chronicled on an NBC news special several years ago. Man for whom Kolba died, 82 years old at the time, was shown telling this story as tears streamed down his cheeks. A mobile camera followed him around his little white house to a marble monument carefully tended with flowers. The inscription read: IN MEMORY OF MAXIMILLAN KOLBA. HE DIED IN MY PLACE.

Example (albeit an imperfect one) of what JC did for all who have faith in Him for E.L.

T/Gospel is t/good news of salvation in JC. That's narrowly defined. I think we can broaden that a bit to say t/Gospel encompasses our entire life in JC, incl. our sanctification.

3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

JC is sufficient. He accomplished everything we need to be right w/God & to live a life pleasing to Him.

Back to our ? – Is there such a thing as ==>
6c . . . **a different gospel**— ???

Are there “many roads to heaven” as so many assert today?

No.

-- John 14:6; Acts 4:12; – John 3 (Jesus w/Nic. – you must be b.a.) --

Paul's not conceding that a different gospel even exists, not legitimately. This is what makes ==>

I . . . Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous

A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ

B. Because Alternate Gospels Don't Exist

Paul calls it ==>

6c . . . **a different gospel**—

Adds in v. 7 ==>

7a **which is not another**— . . .

1. Paul uses 2 different words here

6c . . . **a different** (ἕτερος) **gospel**—

7a . . . **which is not another** (ἄλλος) —

a. Both of these words can refer to something else (“another”)

ἕτερος may refer to another of a different kind, (ἄλλος), another of the same kind.

To b a heterosexual (ἕτερος) is to have affinity for t/opp. sex.

On t/other hand, ἄλλος is used of something of t/same kind.
John 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another (ἄλλος) Helper, that He may be with you forever;

6c . . . **a different** (ἕτερος) **gospel**—

7a . . . **which is not another** (ἄλλος) —

IOW – Paul is saying that to turn to a diff. (ἕτερος) gospel in v. 6 is to turn to a false Gospel because it isn't another (ἄλλος) v. 7.

It's diff., but it's of another kind. It's not t/authentic gospel.

(1) In fact, ἕτερος (v. 6) sometimes refers to something that's not only different, but bad (negative)

Word “orthodoxy” which means good doctrine.

“heterodoxy” which means bad doctrine.

It's ἕτερος. Another doctrine of a different kind.

2. Paul's point is that another (ἕτερος) gospel is a contradiction in terms

I. Why Is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous

A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ

5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

B. Because Alternate Gospels (Like Alternate Realities) Don't Exist

Logically follows (3d point which we will save for next time).

C. Because the Authentic Gospel is as Immutable as God's Nature

It does not change.

We live in strange times. I believe that as X's coming draws near, there will be an increase of those who forsake t/faith. (1 Tim. 4)

There is so much confusion out there. We are bombarded w/information, much of it false. T/internet has given a voice to myriads of false doctrines. Seems that everything is up for grabs today, from t/Inerrancy of Scripture to t/nature of God. From t/nature of justifying faith to what it means to live X. Books are written from a purported Evang. viewpoint supporting everything from universal salv. to gay marriage. Maddening. Epistemological crisis. You want a diff. spin on things? There's a group out there that will agree w/you.

Time is ripe for people to customize a Xnty that fits their every whim and desire.

Ray Ortlund Jr. asks the ? “What might evangelicalism, without the evangel, look like?” IOW – what would t/CH be w/o t/Gospel?

“We would have to replace the centrality of the gospel with something else, naturally. So what might take the place of the gospel in our sermons and books and . . . tapes and Sunday school classes and home Bible studies, and above all, in our hearts?”

He lists some possibilities:

- * "a confident manipulation of modern managerial techniques"
- * “a drive toward church growth”
- * “a clever appeal to consumerism by offering a sort of cost-free Christianity lite”
- * "a sympathetic, empathetic, thickly honeyed cultivation of inter-personal relationships"
- * “a determination to take America back to its Christian roots through political power”
- * “a warm affirmation of self-esteem” [cited in Ryken]

I guess t/CH w/o t/gospel would look very much like what so much of it looks like today.

Martin Luther rightly warned that "there is a clear and present danger that the devil may take away from us the pure doctrine of faith and may substitute for it the doctrines of works and of human traditions. It is very necessary,

therefore, that this doctrine of faith be continually read and heard in public." [cited in Ryken]

The good news of the Cross & peace w/God through faith alone in JC must be preached, believed, and lived – in it's uncompromising fulness.

On that, we will not compromise. Ever.