

Title: **The Devastating Danger of Desertion (Part 1)**

Passage: **Galatians 1:6-7**

Theme: **When the Only Alternative to the Authentic is an Anathema Stick with the Authentic**

Number: **0714Ga1.6-7(5)**

Date: **July 13, 2014**

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### {Read Passage}

#### [i] Back in Galatians

Been a few weeks . . . This is our 5<sup>th</sup> message in what is a new series through this Ep... We've moved through all of the introd. /prefunc. matters of vv. 1-5 & now turn what rely is an abrpt crnr in v. 6.

#### [ii] Last message: No Time for Kudos

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

Paul an A. – to the Ch's of G. (1-2)

Grace and Peace (3)

Preview of the Gospel in v. 4

Doxology in v. 5

Right to t/point in v. 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.

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

That's what Paul outlines in these 5 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....

[iv] First I want to set t/stage so you understand what's happening here

If you don't understand what's happening in the context you're apt to misunderstand how it is applicable today.

[v] What was TAP's relationship to these 1<sup>st</sup> c. Xns in south Galatia?

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

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.

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

Custom = locate a Jewish synagogue in each town and begin to proclaim X there. They would generally be rejected by t/Jews in each of those towns and they'd then turn their attention to t/Gentiles.

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. CH's were est. in places like Lystra, Icon., Derbe in that lower central region we call southern or provincial Gal.

[vi] Paul and Barnabas were itinerants

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

They would do what they could to put qualif. leaders in place, to write to these CH's & follow up with them. 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;

**[vii] Same thing happened here in Galatia – only much more quickly  
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 and steel also holds for those that are spiritual in nature.

16<sup>th</sup> c. Father of t/Reformation ML recognized 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.

What happened in 16<sup>th</sup> c. Wittenberg happened to 1<sup>st</sup> c. Galatia.

False Apostles went to work on t/CH shortly after Paul left.

[viii] 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 English “Judaizer” from a single word in Gal. 2:14  
ἰουδαῖζω (to live as a Jew according to the customs).

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

Judaizers were perhaps t/first heretical sub-Xn group. Today we have  
Mormons & Jehovah's Witnesses; then they had the Judaizers.

They were Jewish nationalists who claimed to follow X but taught that  
t/Mosaic Law was mandatory for Jew and Gentile alike. As Jewish  
national. 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.

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

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

Galatians 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.

Philippians 3 – false circumcision (true circumcision is of t/heart /  
spiritual / regardless of gender).

Paul also seems to address this group in 2 Corinthians.

In t/case of t/Gal. CH's – there appar. 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.

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

We might sum up these 5 vv. ==>

When the Only Alternative to the Authentic is an Anathema Stick with the Authentic

Answering t/? ==>

*I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?*

Clarify . . .

“Desertion”

**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 the Galatian Xns were flirting (dancing) with a false Gospel. 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” is a PT verb ind. that when Paul wrote, their defection was only in t/initial stage. IOW – it was in progress.

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

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

To Dance with Desertion is to Flirt with Apostasy. What's A?

1 Timothy 4:1 refers to 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.

An A. is someone who professes an orthodox belief in JC as their Lord and Savior who later goes on to reject that belief.

That can happen lots of different ways.

Some leave the 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 give evidence they were never regenerate in t/first place.

Here's t/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/second person of the Trinity, as t/one who died on my behalf and was resurrected t/3d day, and that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone in Him alone.

Then the 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

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;

The warnings are real. When applied by t/Spirit to a regenerate heart they are 1 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 the faith and 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 and 2 the next)

#### A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ

##### 1. Note how Paul begins verse 6

**I am astonished** (Θαυμάζω)

a. 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. Present tense ind. continued bewilderment.

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

What?

**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.

Only a month 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 orchestrated by PBO.

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 apparently 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.

Interestingly, 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](http://www.worldmag.com/2014/06/the_curious_case_of_bowe_bergdahl)

As of June this year his case is under formal invest. by t/US Army as to whether he willfully deserted his post. Ser. bus.

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.

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

***I. Why is Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous?***

***A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ***

Where there is no grace and no Christ there is no hope.

## 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 ==>

... 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 ==>

... 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.

Back to our ? – Is there such a thing as ==>

... 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 (which is what makes ==>

*I. . . Dancing with Desertion so Devastatingly Dangerous*

*A. Because it Abandons the Grace of Jesus Christ*

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

Paul calls it ==>

... a **different gospel**—

Adds in v. 7 ==>

**which is not another**—

1. Paul uses 2 different words here

... a different (ἕτερος) gospel—

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.

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

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

Word “orthodoxy” which means good doctrine.

“heterodoxy” which means bad doctrine.

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*

Galatians 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 justifying faith. Books are written from a purported Evang. viewpoint supporting everything from universal salv. to gay marriage. Maddening. Epistemological crisis.

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 cassette tapes and Sunday school classes and home Bible studies, and above all, in our hearts?" He lists some possibilities:

- \* "a passionate devotion to the pro-life cause"
- \* "a confident manipulation of modern managerial techniques"
- \* "a drive toward church growth"
- \* "a deep concern for the institution of the family"
- \* "a clever appeal to consumerism by offering a sort of cost-free Christianity lite"
- \* "a sympathetic, empathetic, thickly honeyed cultivation of interpersonal 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 t/CH 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.