



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 242”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **Galatians 1:6–7**:

**6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

In this last book written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman incarceration, Paul has an extremely weighty question to address. The question is, does a Gentile have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian?

Paul begins his letter with the salutation, in **Galatians 1:1**:

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised [Jesus Christ] from the dead),

Paul begins his letter in this way to establish his bona fides. Paul's ministry among the churches of Galatia was being challenged by the Judaizing Christian teachers that came to Galatia after him, claiming that Paul did not really have the authority of an apostle, as Paul was neither one of the original twelve apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ nor was Paul enrolled into the number of the apostles as was Matthias, who was chosen by the eleven original apostles that survived Judas Iscariot to take Judas' place after Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was the apostle that brought Christianity to the four churches of Galatia, the churches of Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Paul was not an apostle because he had the experience of walking with the Lord Jesus Christ during Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry, but Paul did have the experience of seeing, talking to and being converted to Christianity by the Lord



Jesus Christ Himself, as Paul put it, one born out of due time. Paul explains his personal situation to the Corinthian church, in **1Corinthians 15:3–11**:

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that [Christ] was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that [Christ] was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 After that [Christ] was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

7 After that [Christ] was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

8 Then last of all [Christ] was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and [Christ's] grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

However, Paul's bona fides were being challenged by the Judaizing Christians that came from Jerusalem after Paul established the churches in Galatia. Those that came later had a different gospel to preach than did Paul. Paul reintroduces himself to the Galatians and reminds the Galatians that he was the Apostle that brought them the gospel in the first place so that he can use his authority to set the record straight. Paul begins to reestablish the gospel even from the beginning of his letter, in **Galatians 1:2b–5**:

2 To the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

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

5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The key to any Christian understanding the gospel is the recognition of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that we might be beneficiaries of His grace and thus delivered from this present evil age.

Famously, Paul puts it thusly for the Ephesian church, in **Ephesians 2:8–10**:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The key to salvation is that we remember that salvation was accomplished for us on Calvary's Cross by the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His suffering and death, paid the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed.



The devil wants mankind to want to reject that fact, and to take at least partial credit for our own salvation due to the good works that we have done. But Paul makes it clear, in this passage of Scripture, that any good work that we may have done on planet earth is a function of God's workmanship, prepared by the Lord God and created by Christ Jesus, Who gave us the power through His Holy Spirit to do His will.

Whatever power we may exercise is empowerment by the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me give you an example. Peter, the leader of the fledgling Christian band, preached his great Pentecostal sermon to expand the Jerusalem church past the disciples and the women, in **Acts 2:14–36**:

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

23 [Jesus], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that [Jesus] should be held by it.

25 For David says concerning [Jesus]: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’



29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, [God] would raise up the Christ to sit on His throne,

31 [David], foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that [Jesus’] soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, [Jesus] poured out this which you now see and hear.

34 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but [David] says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,

35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

The unassailable logic that necessitated that David, being a prophet, was not speaking of himself but of the Lord Jesus Christ, penetrated the crowd. The logic of David’s prophecy, when combined with the fact of the empty grave of the Lord Jesus Christ, allowed the men to whom Peter was preaching to come to the same logical conclusion to which Peter and the other apostles had come, that Jesus Christ is Lord, because He rose from the dead, unassisted by any human means or mechanisms, but rather by the power of God. After a few minutes of reflection, the crowd responded. **Acts 2:37** informs us:

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Peter had the answer ready. **Acts 2:38–41** informs us:

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Thus, after that Pentecostal first tongue talking session, Peter preached the Lord Jesus Christ and three thousand souls joined the church. Oh, but the three thousand souls did not join the church because of the disciples’ tongue talking or Peter’s preaching. Rather, the three thousand souls joined the church because Peter’s recitation of the fact of the Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrection cut them to the heart.



The empty grave that Peter proclaimed was a fact in evidence to those who were being saved, and they concluded that this fact was true, despite their leaders in the Jewish temple disputing this fact. So, once they understood the truth and the import of the fact of the empty tomb, they had only to reach the logical conclusion that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as had been prophesied in the Scripture, and had risen from the dead as had been prophesied in the Scripture, and as Jesus' original disciples and a group of five hundred men to whom Jesus spoke after His resurrection testified.

This is the gospel. To put the gospel succinctly, **John 3:16–17** informs us:
16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus informed His disciples, in **Luke 24:46–48**:
46 Then [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,
47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48 And you are witnesses of these things.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul all clarify that Christian preaching must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul all clarify that we can only be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul all clarify that we can only do good works by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, Peter and Paul all clarify that we can only repent of our sins by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Allow me to reiterate that which the Apostle Paul told the Ephesian church, in **Ephesians 2:8–10**:

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,
9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.
10 For we are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

But here is where the contention occurs. The Galatians and other Gentile Christians were being influenced to change the parameters of the gospel by the Jewish Judaizing Christians, who have snuck into the church as teachers even before Paul became unavailable because of his imprisonment. **Acts 15:1** informs us:

1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

What does circumcision have to do with grace? What does circumcision have to do with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? What does



circumcision have to do with salvation? The plain answer to the question is nothing, but those Judaizing Christians want to maintain the customs of the Law of Moses, even though participating in those customs have proven ineffective to provide salvation in any way, shape or form.

Not only are the Jewish ceremonies ineffective in providing salvation, it happens to be true that the very ones promulgating the Jewish ceremonies are the same ones that campaigned to have the Lord Jesus Christ crucified and, as far as we know, are not particularly repentant, as they continue to persecute the church.

Nonetheless, the Judaizing Christians wanted the church to maintain the Jewish rituals and for the Gentile members of the church to become Jews, at least as far as ritual observances were concerned. And while these Judaizing Christians paid lip service to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were firmly convinced that the Old Testament ceremonies contained in the Laws of Moses should remain an integral part of Christianity. In fact, as we have read, they taught that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was ineffective for salvation, and that a man could not be saved at all unless he first availed himself of the Jewish ceremony of circumcision.

Now, the Apostle Paul and the Jerusalem council made a distinction between the Jewish moral law, as in the law against theft, murder, sexual immorality and coveting, and the Jewish ceremonial law, as in the law of Temple worship and circumcision. And it was clear to Paul and his party that Temple worship and circumcision had nothing to do with salvation. **Acts 15:2–3** informs us:

2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with [the Judaizing Christians], [the church] determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

The description of the conversion of the Gentiles by the Apostle Paul was simple. Paul preached the same gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as did Peter, and the Gentiles responded as did the Jews to whom Peter preached. The ceremonial Law of Moses was not part of Peter's preaching, nor was it part of Paul's preaching. There was no logical reason to require the saved Gentiles to participate in the ceremonial Law of Moses, including the law of circumcision, which had nothing whatsoever to do with salvation. And we should remember that the men that voted for Barabbas' release and the Lord Jesus Christ's crucifixion were all circumcised, and their circumcision did not make them particularly holy on that day of voting.



However, Paul's opinion was not a universal opinion. **Acts 15:4–5** informs us:

4 And when [Paul and Barnabas] had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”

As far as the Pharisees and the Judaizing Christians were concerned, anyone seeking to become a Christian had to ceremonially become a Jew first. To the Pharisees and the Judaizing Christians, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ was simply an extension of Judaism.

This dispute was argued and settled in the Jerusalem council. **Acts 15:22–33** informs us:

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23 They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—to whom we gave no such commandment—

25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

30 So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter.

31 When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement.

32 Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.

33 And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.



Obviously, the letter from the Jerusalem church was read with the intention of settling the issue. But actually, the issue was not settled. The Judaizing Christians were serious about not giving up their point that easily.

The Judaizing Christians continued to enjoin the Gentile churches to practice Jewish customs, the letter from the Jerusalem church notwithstanding. And in Paul and Barnabas' absence, the Judaizing Christians efforts were having some effect. After all, the Judaizing Christians reasoned with the Gentiles, why not be circumcised as we are? How does it hurt your Christianity to practice the laws of Moses? It is entirely possible to be circumcised and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as we do. In fact, the Old Testament commands that you be circumcised if you want to be godly, as we are.

As the messengers from the churches told the incarcerated Paul about the continued controversy, Paul found it necessary to address the issue in this letter to the four Galatian churches. **Galatians 1:6–7** informs us:

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul called the teaching of the Judaizing Christians “a different gospel”. Paul did so because this “different gospel” did not have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as its focus, but rather, this “different gospel” focused on the ceremonial works of the laws of Moses. But since the most ardent practitioners of these ceremonial works in the laws of Moses were not saved in the first place, but rather persecuted and continue to persecute the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul made the point that it was the perverters of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that wanted to drag the church into Judaism.

But the fact of the matter is that it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that anyone who is saved is saved. It is by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary's Cross on that fateful Good Friday and rose from the dead early on that first Easter Sunday morning that anyone who is saved is saved. And while it is true that a person who was previously circumcised can be saved, neither circumcision or uncircumcision has any bearing on salvation.

Let me give you a secular example. In a few hours, if the Lord wills, I am going to sit in front of my television set and watch the NBA finals game between the Milwaukee Bucks and the Phoenix Suns. I have a mild rooting interest in the Milwaukee Bucks, whom I would like to see win the game so that the outcome of the series will be in doubt for a few more days and I have more professional basketball to watch yet this season. I enjoy watching professional basketball games, but watching professional basketball games has no bearing on my salvific status.

No doubt, there are some players on each team playing that are saved. No doubt, there are some players on each team playing that are unsaved. But



whether any particular player is saved or unsaved has no bearing, as far as I know, on the outcome of the game. I consider myself saved because I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but as far as I know, my salvific status and my rooting interest in the game has no bearing on the outcome of the game.

I watch the game because I enjoy watching professional basketball. But I have no disillusionment that watching professional basketball will bring me closer to Christ. I watch professional basketball because I like to do so, and my relationship with Christ has nothing to do with it.

I would be as wrong as two left shoes if I told you, from this pulpit, that in order to be saved, one must root for the Milwaukee Bucks. I would be equally as wrong if I told you, from this pulpit, that in order to be saved, one must root for the Phoenix Suns. I know, for a fact, that your rooting interest in the NBA finals, if you have one, has nothing to do with your salvation. In fact, you can be saved without having a rooting interest in the NBA finals or even watching the NBA finals at all. One thing has nothing to do with the other.

Similarly, circumcision has nothing to do with salvation. Worshipping at the Jewish Temple has nothing to do with salvation. And there are many things that we do that have nothing to do with salvation.

My wife teaches quilting to many students across the country and around the world, but her ability to teach quilting has nothing to do with her salvation. There is only one thing that has anything to do with our salvation. **John 3:16–17** informs us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus informed His disciples, in **Luke 24:46–48**:

46 Then [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And you are witnesses of these things.

It is important for us to recognize, as the old Hymnologist tells us,

You may build great cathedrals large or small, you can build skyscrapers grand and tall, you may conquer all the failures of the past, but only what you do for Christ will last.

Remember only what You do for Christ will last. Remember only what you do for Christ will last. Only what you do for Him will be counted at the end; only what you do for Christ will last.



It is incumbent upon us to neither add anything to nor take anything away from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is incumbent upon us to not turn away to a different gospel in any way, shape, form or fashion, because our salvation was purchased for us out on a hill called Calvary by the Lord Jesus Christ, as He suffered, bled and died that our sins might be forgiven.

And there is nothing that we can add to the Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Our preaching must be Christ focused, as there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Other than believing in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no good work that we can do that will add to our salvation. Regardless of that which we do, we cannot be more saved than we are once we develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other gospel to which we should turn; there are no other rituals that we should practice. Our salvific focus should be completely on that which the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on that hill called Calvary, and as the old Hymnologist tells us,

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and His righteous.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

We should be aware that the devil will do all he can to divert our attention from the eternal cause of Christ to the earthly causes of man, and try to induce us to combine those earthly causes with the eternal cause in order to water down the eternal cause. So, we have prosperity ministries in which the amount of success that people have is somehow associated with how saved they are. We have healing ministries in which a person's health is somehow associated with how saved they are. And we can continue on, because the devil is constantly thinking up new ways to put a caveat on the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ so that he can get us to major in the minors and minor in the majors.

But saints, let me tell you, even as Paul informs the Galatians, in **Galatians 1:6-7:**

**6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

Oh, please ma'am and please sir, be aware. The devil desires, with all his evil heart, to turn us away from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to some other, in fact, to any other gospel. Whenever he finds us susceptible to any cause other than the cause of Christ, he will encourage us to make that cause uppermost in our minds so that he can distract us from our salvation.



But I can only say, “forewarned is forearmed.” In all cases and in all places, our focus needs to be on the Lord Jesus Christ. We must not be swayed by the devil’s allegations that the gospel is somehow fraudulent, like a fairy tale or a fictional account, but we must become steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Oh, we cannot allow any doubts about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to relegate the gospel to the status of fiction in our minds, but we must become firmly convinced, without the shadow of a doubt, that that which the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on Calvary, His resurrection from the dead on that first Easter Sunday morning and His appearances to His disciples, to the 500 men at once, and finally to the Apostle Paul are as true as the day is long.

So let us examine our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not be swayed by those that would endeavor to get us off the track. Let us absolutely conclude that the New Testament is the truth, that the gospel writers were eyewitnesses who faithfully recorded that which they knew to be true, and that those who wrote the epistles wrote under the absolute influence of the Holy Spirit. Let us accommodate no other gospel in our spirit man, and develop absolute confidence in the gospel that was given to us; that the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary on that Friday and rose from the dead on that Sunday, appeared to His disciples, and sent His Holy Spirit to develop His church. And finally, that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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