

GALATIANS
Week 1: A Tale of Two Gospels
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2019
WEEK 1: A TALE OF TWO GOSPELS
GALATIANS 1

RECAP

In this first sermon walking through the New Testament book of Galatians, we discovered not only the fact that the Galatian church had been deceived by a false gospel, but that churches today must beware of the same deception.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This message series will walk through one book of the Bible: Galatians. What's one of your favorite books of the Bible and why?
2. Josh gave some context behind the book of Galatians and highlighted the cultural differences between Jews and Gentiles and how they approached Christianity within the church. From your personal experience, what have been some of the biggest differences that have threatened to divide the church?
3. Paul regularly references the 'gospel' in Galatians 1, including the assertion that the Galatian churches are deserting the true gospel. Go around your group and each take a moment to verbally answer the question, "What is the gospel?"
4. Josh gave six reasons why the Jews were able to lead the churches in Galatia astray. Have you (or a church you've been a part of) ever followed a deception? What was it? Why did you follow it?
5. Read Galatians 1:6-7 and reference the six false gospels (Message Notes) Josh listed. Which ones have you heard expressed or personally experienced? Which one is the most prevalent or the most dangerous to you? What other false gospels would you add?

NEXT STEP

Paul finishes chapter one by recounting his personal story of how he came to trust in Jesus. What's your story? Share it with the group!

For more information (training and support) on how to start a small group, contact abigail.parker@cbcva.org

6 FALSE GOSPELS TODAY

1. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____
2. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____
3. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____
4. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____
5. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____
6. _____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____

THE TRUE GOSPEL

_____ gospel - *God's highest priority is your* _____

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GALATIANS 1:1

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Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. *Galatians 1:1*

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

Paul (in its full form of *Paulus* or *Paullus*) is a common enough Roman surname found frequently in classical literature. Even in the New Testament, the Sergius Paulus of Acts 13:7 bears it. Originally an aristocratic Roman name, it was later borne by many newly enfranchised citizens, whether because their ancestors had originally been slaves of some member of this house, or as a compliment to some provincial governor of that name. Beyond the fact that Paul was born a Roman citizen, we know nothing of the origins of citizenship in his family.

It is just possible that Paul was not even the name used by his enfranchised family, but chosen by him because of its assonance with his Jewish name, Saul. Many instances of this sort of assimilation occur in the New Testament: for instance, the Hebrew 'Simeon' (Acts 15:14) appears in Greek form as *Simon* (Matt. 16:17). We do not know whether Paul continued to be known as Saul in Jewish-Christian circles; it is very likely. Certainly when Simon Peter is mentioned in Jewish Christian contexts he is more commonly called 'Simeon' or 'Cephas', the latter being the Semitic name corresponding to 'Peter'. Nevertheless, it is only before the first missionary journey that Luke uses the name 'Saul' to describe the apostle of the Gentiles. After Acts 13:9, he is always 'Paul', and this is the name that he himself uses in all his letters. It is as though his acceptance of the Gentile mission to which his conversion led him demanded the renunciation of his Jewish past. His Jewish name, with its reminder of Saul, the first king of Israel, the pride of Benjamin, stands for that heritage. When writing to what are presumed to be Gentile, not Jewish, converts in Galatia, the Gentile name 'Paul' has peculiar appropriateness. He is reminding them that for Christ's sake he had already identified himself with them (4:12), or 'become as you are'. Cole, R. A. (1989). [Galatians: an introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 9, pp. 64-65). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*) is the Greek word for "apostle." This transliterated Greek word, untranslated, corresponds to the Latin term 'missionary', which might well be used for it. Most assume apostle is an office, held only by the twelve disciples of Jesus, but most often in Scripture utilizes this term as a form and description of an extraordinary emissary sent to represent the gospel. Ever since there has been continual debate on whether "apostles" died out after the original twelve or continue in today's missionaries.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

With the beginning line of Paul's letter to the Galatians, not only do we see a standard greeting of a first-century letter, we see a concise summary of the gospel that would underpin Paul's argument for the entire epistle. Jesus was not just a man. Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Law and Prophets to be the one sacrifice for our sins, and the resurrection proved Jesus' divine identity and authority to offer salvation for all who would believe.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- Jesus of Nazareth was more than just a man (human), he was also fully God (divine).
- Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ (Messiah), the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and Prophets.
- The essence of the gospel (Good News) is that Jesus rose from the dead, securing our forgiveness and salvation for those who believe.

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- Paul's driving passion and effectiveness for the gospel came directly from his calling. He was secure in the knowledge that he was sent not by man but by God Himself. While we should not automatically go seeking blinding lights and divine encounters with the resurrected Jesus like Paul in Acts 9, we need to spend the time alone with God (like Paul did in Arabia, Galatians 1:17) to determine God's calling on our life. From that conviction will come a Paul-like passion and effectiveness for the gospel.

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Like Paul, if we spend the time in the presence of Almighty God until we discern and receive God's unique calling on our lives, and if we can boldly and clearly articulate the gospel, we can quite simply change our world. The formula has not changed over the centuries. For too many Christians, we have not spent the time necessary in God's presence to drill down and discover God's unique calling on our lives. And for too many Christians, we allow ourselves to be caught up with and distracted by the world, distancing ourselves from the transformative power of the gospel. If we follow Paul's example, we can change our world. It's as simple as that.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. *Romans 1:1-5*

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- Who is one of the most passionate and effective Christians that you personally know? What do you think drives her or his effectiveness for the gospel?
- What calling has God placed on your life (that you know of)? If God called Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles, what has God called you to be and to do?