

Trinity Lutheran Church

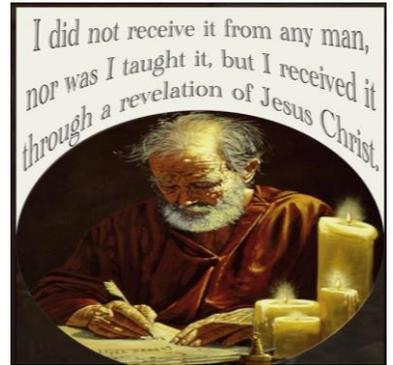
Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 3-27-22

Lesson: 5 - Chapter 1:8-12



TEXT AND STUDY

(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.

(anathema = cherem = cursed = something devoted to destruction by God;

(Lev 27:28,29; Dt 7:26; Jsh 6:17;

1 Cor 15:1; 1 Cor 12:3; 16:22; Rom 9:3; 16:17)

(10) 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**. (11) For I would have you know, brothers, that **the gospel** that was preached by me is not man's gospel. (12) For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through **a revelation of Jesus Christ**.

(Acts 22:14; Rom 1:1; 2:16,29; 6:18,22; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:10; 4:2-5; 10:33; 11:23; 15:1-3;

2 Cor 12:1; Eph 3:2-6; 6:6; Col 3:22; 1 Thess 2:4)

Luther's Commentary - Vol. 26

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.*

Here Paul is breathing fire. His zeal is so fervent that he almost begins to curse the angels themselves. He says: "Even if we ourselves, my brethren, Timothy and Titus, and I, and all who are with me, to say nothing of the others—indeed, even if an angel from heaven should preach to you, etc., I would wish that my brethren and I, yes, even an angel from heaven, be accursed rather than that **my Gospel** be overthrown." This is a passionate zeal, that he has the courage to curse so boldly not only himself and his brethren but even an angel from heaven. The Greek word ἀνάθεμα, אָנָתֵמָה in Hebrew, means something cursed, execrable, contemptible, something that has no relation, participation, or communication with **God**.

Thus Joshua says (6:17): "Let the city of Jericho be ἀνάθεμα forever, so that it is never reconstructed." And in the last chapter of Leviticus it is written: "If a man or a beast has been devoted or ἀνάθεμα, let him be put to death and not permitted to live" (Lev. 27:28). Thus the divine sentence was that Amalek and some other cities destined for the ἀνάθεμα were to be completely demolished (Ex. 17:14). So this is what Paul means: "I would wish that I, others, yes, even an angel from heaven be accursed rather than that we or others preach any other gospel than the one we or others have preached." Thus Paul curses himself first; for clever debaters usually begin by criticizing themselves, in order that then they may be able to reprove others more freely and more severely.

Therefore Paul concludes that there is no other gospel than the one he himself has been preaching. Nor is any other gospel to be preached by him or by anyone else, or even by an angel from heaven. For once the voice of **the Gospel** has sounded, it will not be revoked until **the Last Day**.

9. *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.*

Paul says the same thing over again, but he shifts the persons. Earlier he had cursed himself, his brethren, and an angel from heaven. Here he says: “If there is anyone besides us who preached to you any gospel other than the one you have received from us, let him also be accursed.” Thus he clearly excommunicates and curses all teachers in general—himself, his brethren, angels, and, in addition, anyone else at all, that is, his opponents, the false teachers. This shows great fervor of spirit in the apostle, that he has the courage to curse all teachers throughout the earth and heaven. For all men must either yield to **that Gospel** which Paul had been preaching or be accursed and damned.

The shift in persons should be noted. Paul speaks one way in his first anathema and another way in his second. In the first he says: “If we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you”; in the second he says: “contrary to that which you received.” He does this intentionally, to keep the Galatians from saying: “Paul, we have not changed **the Gospel** that you preached to us. We had misunderstood you, but the teachers who came after you have set us straight.” “I will not stand for this,” he says. “They should neither add anything nor correct anything. What you heard from me was the pure **Word of God**. Let only this stand. I myself do not want to be a different teacher **of the Gospel** from what I was, nor do I want you to be different pupils. Therefore if you hear anyone teaching a gospel different from the one you heard from me, or bragging that he will bring you something better than what you received from me, let him and his disciples be accursed.”

In this way the ministers of Satan invade, and insinuate themselves into, the minds of men by promising that they will bring something better. They admit that those who taught **the Gospel** before them made a good start, but they say that this is not enough. Thus today the fanatics do pay us the compliment that we began the work of **the Gospel** correctly. But because we despise and condemn their blasphemous doctrine, they call us “neopapists,” who are twice as bad as the old papists. Thus it is that thieves and robbers invade **the Lord’s** sheepfold “to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). First they confirm our doctrine, but then they correct us and claim to explain more clearly what we have understood incorrectly or only partially. This was how the false apostles gained access to the Galatians.

They said: “Yes, Paul has laid **the foundation of Christian teaching**. But he does not teach the true way of justification, for he teaches men to turn away from **the Law**. Now what he could not bring you correctly, this you should now receive from us.” But Paul refuses to let anything else be taught by anyone or heard and accepted by the Galatians than what he himself had taught them before and what they had heard and accepted from him. “Therefore,” he says, “let those who either teach or accept anything else be accursed.”

...To refute this wicked and blasphemous doctrine of theirs you have here a clear text and a thunderbolt. Here Paul subordinates himself, an angel from heaven, teachers on earth, and any other masters at all to **Sacred Scripture**. This queen must rule, and everyone must obey, and be subject to, her. The pope, Luther, Augustine, Paul, an angel from heaven—these should not be masters, judges, or arbiters but only witnesses, disciples, and confessors of Scripture. Nor should any doctrine be taught or heard in the church except the **pure Word of God**. Otherwise, let the teachers and the hearers be accursed along with their doctrine.

LIFE APPLICATION

If the Gospel proclaimed by Paul was received through **a revelation of Jesus Christ**, then what does this require of us?