

1. Paul expresses his astonishment that the people in Galatia were so quickly falling away from their hope in Christ, salvation by grace alone, and turning to a false hope. This false hope was a distortion of the true gospel which would not save anyone.
2. Paul teaches that if anyone should come down and preach a different message than the true gospel, then they should be accursed, or condemned to Hell. Paul is so adamant about this that he repeats himself in case they missed it. If anyone preaches a different gospel than the true gospel, then they should immediately be damned.
3. Paul says that if he were seeking the approval of man he might back down on these assertions, but Paul, and all Christians, must seek the approval of God instead of man. Anyone who seeks the approval of man on essential matters like the Gospel is not a servant of Christ.
4. Christ has set true Christians free! We are free as long as we are truly trusting in Christ. Paul warned the church that a faith in anything else than the true Gospel would leave them in slavery. Paul taught that if the Galatians accepted circumcision as a necessary work for salvation, then Christ's saving work would not be of any help to them.
5. Paul taught that any person who accepts circumcision as a condition for salvation would be obligated to keep every command of God in order to be saved. If someone attempts to keep even one commandment as a condition for salvation then they will remain severed from the grace of Christ. The only way to be saved according to the true Gospel is through grace by faith, or trust, in Jesus Christ.
6. A life not lived by faith alone in Christ is lived in vain. Salvation in Christ can only be received through hearing with faith, not works of the Law. Abraham, who did many works, was saved because he believed in God's promises and it was counted to him as righteousness.
7. Salvation in Christ comes through faith in Jesus Christ. It is by faith that we receive the hope of true righteousness, which is a fruit of the Spirit. In Jesus Christ salvation is through faith and cannot be earned by any works. Most of the Jews in the Church were already circumcised. However, these false teachers were teaching that circumcision was a condition for salvation.
8. Paul made such strong statements against the false teachers in Galatia because they were teaching that salvation could be achieved through works. By teaching that we could perfect our salvation through works of the flesh the false teachers were nullifying true salvation in Christ.
9. The leaven of false teaching had caused the church at Galatia to embrace a false message. Even some of the more mature Christians had begun to mingle with and accept these false teachers as part of the fellowship. While no true Christian would ultimately fall away from Christ, there were many people who were falling prey to this false gospel.
10. Paul had confidence in the true Christians and knew that these false teachers bear the penalty for their teaching, but he was concerned about the spread of the true Gospel. If the offense of the cross was removed, then they would be left with a false gospel. No one who heard the message of these false teachers could be saved by it.
11. God, through the Apostle Paul, uses extremely strong language against these false teachers. His righteous anger burns against them and expresses desire for them to be mutilated as they practice circumcision. If they were to lose their reputation as men, then church at Galatia would no longer listen to them.

Application

1. The false teachers in Galatia were teaching that salvation could be achieved through works. This teaching is in direct contradiction to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Even adding one work to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ results in a different gospel, which cannot save. Do not believe the message of salvation by works.
2. There are many teachers even today who add one or many works as necessary for salvation. Do not just simply reject their message, but also protect yourself, your family, your friends, your church, and others by not having anything to do with these false teachers. Avoid them!

Scriptures

Matthew 7:15-20

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Galatians 1:6-10

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 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. 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.

Galatians 5:1-12

⁵ For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴ You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. ⁷ You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. ¹¹ But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. ¹² I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

Galatians 3:2-6

² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them