



## **Overcoming "people" strongholds**

September 18, 2017

**GALATIANS 1:6-10 NKJV** – (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. (8) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, **let him be accursed**. (9) As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, **let him be accursed**. (10) For do I now **persuade men**, or God? Or **do I seek to please men**? For if I still **pleased men**, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

There was once an old man, a boy and a donkey. The old man and the boy were walking, with the donkey walking along side both of them when the towns' people said, "Look at the waist! The old man is actually walking the donkey instead of using it as designed." The old man thought to himself - *Hmm, they have a point there*. So the old man got up on the donkey and the young boy led the donkey. Then somebody else said, "Look at that. That old man is making the boy walk while he rides the donkey." Again, the old man said to himself - *Hmm, they have a point there*. So he put the young boy on the donkey and he began to lead them. All of sudden someone said, "Look at that! That young boy is making that old man walk and lead a donkey. He is much younger and stronger than the old man!" The old man thought again - *Hmm, again they have a point*. The next person that saw them saw the donkey on the old man's back. This is a message to the leadership! Trying to please people will drive you crazy!

The Galatian believers probably thought they were simply adding a few Jewish customs to the gospel in order to enhance the value of their faith in Christ. But this addition to the gospel actually negated the essence of the gospel. Paul rebukes the Galatians for their desertion; he blames the confusion on those who perverted the gospel; he then pronounces a solemn condemnation of all who tamper with the truth of the gospel. Desertion from the Gospel (1:6).

Paul's expression of astonishment is actually a stinging rebuke: I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel! The present tense of the verb **deserting** tells us that the Galatian Christians had not yet decisively carried out their desertion. They were just starting to turn around and leave. Paul's letter was designed to arrest them before they went too far. The one they were deserting was the one who had called them by the grace of Christ. While this may be read as a reference to Paul himself, similar references to God's call by His grace in Paul's life (1:15) and in the Galatians' experience (5:8) indicate that the reference is to God. Paul is stunned that people who recently experienced so much of God's miraculous power by his Spirit in their lives (3:1-5) would now turn away from Him. They are turning their backs on God in order to follow a different gospel and **"IT IS HAPPENING TODAY!"**

The Galatian tragedy is a warning for us that not every quest for spirituality is in reality a quest for God. The emphasis in our day on "spirituality" and "spiritual formation" may be a way of finding God. But it may also be a way of running and hiding from God. Many on this meditation ministry have heard me say this time after time and I say it again, "We must worship **HIM** - not man, in "Spirit and Truth", not religion and truth!" This DOES NOT negate the fact that He sent people before us to teach the gospel. They have a responsibility, therefore, if you are not in agreement with the teaching, do like the Berians and check it out. I mean **REALLY STUDY AS INSTRUCTED** by Paul. Otherwise, how do you overcome people? Stay focused on Christ! If two are focused on the **same**, they are in harmony, even when it is wrong. Just make sure you are harmonized in Christ.

**SCRIPTURE:** DEUTERONOMY 33:27

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** Never let your limitations limit you. **TRUST** God.