



When's the last time it occurred to you that billions of people—most of the world's population live under some sort of false teaching or false religion. In Paul's day, there were an estimated 300 million people worldwide. That is less than the current population of the United States. I realize that this is a missions problem. The gospel is simply not going forth at a rate to even potentially reach everyone. But it is also a false teaching problem because hundreds of millions are impacted by false teaching from those who claim to be Christians! It's bad enough that half of the world's people groups have no gospel witness but there's something particularly sad about so many who have been "reached" with a false gospel or one kind of another.

I want to read the first ten verses of chapter one. But try something for me, would you please? Instead of reading along in your Bible, just listen this time. Rod did this in our men's huddle this week and it was very effective. If it really helps you to read along, by all means do so but try just listening if you can.

*Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—<sup>2</sup> and all the brothers who are with me,  
To the churches of Galatia:*

*<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, <sup>5</sup> to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*<sup>6</sup> 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—<sup>7</sup> not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.*

*<sup>10</sup> 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.*

Read 7 points of outline first...

**1. False teaching brings eternal (and temporary) destruction on the souls of people.**

This goes almost without saying but to make the case even stronger, let's take a deeper dive in the New Testament.

Matt 16:11-12

<sup>11</sup> How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2 Tim 4:3-4

<sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Acts 20:28-30

<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Matt 7:15

<sup>15</sup> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

2 Peter 3:16-17

There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. <sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

Ephesians 4:14

so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

<sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

These are not just old words on a page. This is happening all of the time. I am currently embroiled in a situation similar to this. There is a ministry that is being decimated by a false

teacher. The problem is that false teaching rarely stands on its own. As these verses clearly teach, false teachers are also “ravenous wolves” in sheep’s clothing. They are deceitful, cunning. They twist Scripture. They turn people away from following the truth. So it’s not just false teaching. These men—and there are women as well—draw away followers and lead others into destruction.

The leader of this ministry was hired due to his charismatic personality and business acumen but in two years he has driven away most of the missionary staff and caused incalculable harm to people and ministry. For the past month I have spent at least 30 hours trying to gather information. I have spoken with seven current and former staff and everyone of them have been harmed and abused by this one man. All of them are reeling with hurt, some anger, confusion, sadness, disappointment and hopelessness. Several have had their walks with the Lord damaged by actions from this one leader. I have only met a few of these people in person, but I can feel their pain. I can see the wake of damaged souls and ministry left behind. It’s sickening and sad. So I am doing what I can to bring this evil to light and asking the Lord to grant repentance.

But not all false teachers are quite this bad. There is a range of false and true teachers looks something like this. First there are those who are false teachers and they also have false, selfish motives. This is obviously a worst case scenario. The false teaching that the Galatians churches were facing fits into this category. I’ll talk more about that later.

	UNACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE	
-Some False Teachers -Galatians	-FALSE MOTIVES -FALSE GOSPEL <b>WORST CASE</b>	-FALSE MOTIVES -TRUE GOSPEL	-Jonah -Philippians
-Some False Teachers	-TRUE MOTIVES -FALSE GOSPEL	-TRUE MOTIVES -TRUE GOSPEL <b>BEST CASE</b>	

In theory there are those who are false teachers who have right motives. These are usually people who are following a worst-case scenario type leader. They themselves have been led astray by a more influential false teacher. Thankfully, many of these people come to their senses and some get radically

converted.

This woman, [Doreen Virtue](#), thought she was a Christian but she regularly taught all manner of New age practices in a Christian context. One of the things she gave up was “Angel Cards.” These are gaining in popularity in charismatic circles and they are essentially Christianized tarot cards that purport to tell your future. Do you know how Doreen was converted and repented of this evil stuff? She read the Bible for herself. Imagine that! But she fits into this category of someone who definitely engaged in false teaching but thought she was genuinely helping others.

The third category are those who teach the true gospel but from false motives. Jonah clearly fits into this category. He preached a clear message of judgment upon the Ninevites all the while wishing that they would not repent. Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Philippian church.

“The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice” (Philippians 1:17-18). I used to think that I did not have a category this kind of person. Who preaches truth from selfish motives? Who does that? But in the past several years I have seen a long list of people I would put into this category.

But more than just casting stones at others, it’s a good opportunity to evaluate our own motives. I think Paul is clear here that it is better to do the right thing for the wrong reason than to do the wrong thing. And at some level, I’m not sure our motives can ever be 100% pure at all times. And there are times when you need “to fake it until you make it,” right? Would you believe that every hour I spend as a pastor is not done with pure joy in my heart? Sometimes I just need to pull myself out of bed, put one foot in front of the other and get done what needs gettin’ done. Can you relate?

Nevertheless, we are too often like Jonah. We go about doing what needs to be done but hating a lot of it and complaining all the way. We start by faking it until we make it until all we have left is faking it. We never arrive at right actions and right motives. Our actions AND our motives need to be purified. We need to repent of these emotions and ask the Lord to fill us with supernatural emotions. Yes, we all get tired but at the end of the day, this is itself a gospel issue. If we truly saw what Christ has done for us, we would be increasingly humbled and more and more grateful for all things. And if you need a reminder what the true gospel is about, just go back and read the message from last Sunday. Before Paul addressed the false teaching he laid down the gospel with clarity and power in the first four verses of this chapter. We need daily reminders of these truths.

## **2. False teaching is a rejection of Christ and his truth.**

Notice Paul’s language in verse six. *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.* When you reject the gospel, it is not just truth that is being rejected but Christ himself that is being rejected. We need to be very careful that we never emphasize God’s truth over God himself. It’s far too easy to depersonalize God and turn him into mere words. Obviously we know about God through his words but more importantly, God uses his words so that we could know him, not just know his words.

Last month Karen and I had a coffee meeting with Ray Olson, our discipleship consultant and his wife Darlene. At one point in the conversation, Darlene made the comment that Jesus in the gospel. I replied by pointing out this book by John Piper with the title, *God is the Gospel*. So which one is right? 😊 Both are right, am I right?

Also notice the word “deserting.” This is not merely a difference of opinion. Anyone who rejects the true gospel is not disagreeing, they are deserting. The word means a turncoat. A betrayer. A deserter. They have betrayed Jesus by rejecting his truth. They are not turning away from their doctrine of grace. They are turning away from Christ. They are turning away from the person of grace.

## Let's Deconstruct a Deconversion Story: The Case of Rhett and Link

FEBRUARY 29, 2020 — ALISA CHILDERS



Speaking of turning from grace, we were saddened to learn of the so-called deconversion of these popular Youtube entertainers. They had been on full-time staff with CRU and served as missionaries but now they have completely abandoned the faith. I am guessing that many of your children listen to them so I am providing links to two excellent articles<sup>1</sup> so you can discuss them at home with your family. These two have literally deserted Christ but don't forget that all false teaching, even among those who claim to be

Christians, is deserting Christ.

Have you noticed thus far that I have yet to describe the false teaching that Paul is fighting against here? Based on what I have said thus far you might think that these false teachers promoted another religion. You might think that they were weird pagans who promoted bizarre religious practices. As I said last week, there are countless forms of false gospels but only one true gospel. But in this context, we really need to understand what Paul was fighting against.

There are hints in chapter one and chapter two but the best refutation comes in chapter two, verse 14. This is where Paul confronted Peter in front of everyone. "But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews? We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified" (Galatians 2:15-16).

The false teachers were known as Judaizers. You can tell what they believed and practiced through this passage. These were not Jews practicing their Judaism. They were Jewish converts to Christianity who also taught that Christians still had to obey the whole law. They especially promoted the continued requirement to be circumcised. Gal 2:21 adds some more depth of understanding. "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."

So it was a matter of adding the works of the Law to the work of Christ on the cross. So it was a Jesus plus problem. You know what I mean, right? Jesus plus the Law. Jesus plus good works. Jesus is not enough so you have to add some extra human effort into the equation.

Why would they do this? That question is answered at the very end of the letter.

“It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh” (Galatians 6:12-13).

There it is. Self-promotion and self-protection. They wanted influence and comfort. Their motive was purely selfish and their teaching was purely counterfeit. As I said, theirs was a worst-case scenario.

So how does false teaching from 2000 years ago apply to us? Because this same Jesus plus problem has been happening ever since and continues to multiply in our day. For example, here is the official position of the Roman catholic Church from the Council of Trent.

If any one shall say, that by faith alone the impious is justified; so as to mean that nothing else is required to co-operate in order unto the obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not in any respect necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.

It’s interesting that they use the word anathema is used here because that is the same word that is translated as “accursed” in verse six. So think of the irony here. Paul said that if anyone adds anything to the gospel except Jesus, let him be anathema. And the Catholic Church stated that if you do not add works to Jesus, let him be anathema. It’s crazy.

So if we are no first century Judaizers around and if we’re not Catholic, what do we have to be worried about? I think we all struggle at times with Jesus plus something. Think about how common this is. If you struggle with being accepted by God, you have a Jesus plus problem.

Take just the substitutionary atonement by itself. Jesus took all of your sins and the wrath that you deserved and took it on his sinless body. Then he credited his perfect righteousness to us. If that is not enough to feel accepted by him, then I don’t know what is.

So what is at the end of this equation for you? Jesus + ?? = acceptance

**Rich Maurer**  
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/rhett-link-deconversion/>  
<https://shelbyabbott.com/2020/02/26/red-flags-spiritual-deconstruction-old-friends-rhett-link/>