

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	129		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	1 Timothy 1:15; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-10		
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ANOTHER JESUS? (Part II)

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) identifies three different categories of phobias:

1. **Social phobias:** Now known as social anxiety disorder, this phobia is marked by a fear of social situations in which a person might be judged or embarrassed.
2. **Agoraphobia:** This phobia involves an irrational and extreme fear of being in places where escape is difficult. It may involve a fear of crowded places or even of leaving one's home.
3. **Specific phobias:** When people talk about having a phobia of a specific object such as snakes, spiders, or needles, they are referring to a *specific phobia*. Fears of the natural environment. Fears related to animals. Fears related to medical treatments or issues. Fears related to specific situations.

One important thing to remember is that virtually any object can become a fear object. The names of specific phobias are often formed as nonce words, or words coined for a single occasion only. These names themselves are often formed by taking a Greek prefix that represents the fear object and adding the -phobia suffix. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, the Apostle Paul uses the Greek word *phobos*. Here the Apostle displays great apprehension. About what? Paul is afraid lest his readers' minds should be corrupted (2 Cor. 11:3), lest he should not find them the kind of people they ought to be (12:20), lest he should have worked among them to no purpose (Gal. 4:11). The writer to the Hebrews is similarly afraid lest his readers should have missed their chance with God (4:1).¹ Barclay points out that the word "*phobos* means *fear*, and in all ages of Greek, *phobos* is what is sometimes known as a *middle word*. That is to say, the word itself is quite neutral, and, according to the way in which it is used and the context in which it occurs, it can have either a good or a bad meaning, and can describe something which is useful and praiseworthy, or evil and contemptible. In Greek, *phobos*, *fear*, can be the characteristic either of the coward or of the truly religious man."² Paul's *Apostolic phobia* stems from the peril of seduction that was confronting the Corinthian Church. What was this particular danger? Accepting *another Jesus*. By doing so, the Corinthians were actually going down the path to apostasy. John Owen highlighted three areas in which apostasy usually begins: doctrine, lifestyle, and worship. Owen traced doctrinal apostasy to a lack of Christian experience. He said that when someone has no experience of personal need, no sense of God's righteousness, no spiritual sight of Christ's glory, no submission to the sovereignty of God, and no trembling at God's Word, then doctrinal apostasy is just around the corner. Owen actually regarded an unholy lifestyle as more likely to produce apostasy than abandoning some Christian doctrines. He saw both legalism and lawlessness as leading eventually to apostasy. Owen wanted Christians to know that apostasy could be avoided by heart-cure and heart-care (Prov. 4:23). Keep the Gospel at the very center of our hearts; love its truth and experience its power there. Keep sin out of our hearts, especially the highly-dangerous sins of spiritual pride and a censorious, judgmental spirit.³

- I. **ANOTHER JESUS, ANOTHER SPIRIT, ANOTHER GOSPEL.** "For if the person who has come to you proclaims a *rival* Jesus, whom we did not proclaim or if you welcome a different Spirit, which you did not welcome [in our message] or if [you accept] a different gospel, which you did not accept [as our Gospel] then, you put up with this person right well!"⁴ The somewhat satirical expression *he that cometh* perhaps carries with it the implication that, whoever these false apostles may be, they

have no more authority for intruding into the Corinthian Church, than the malevolent shepherds mentioned by Jesus in Jn. 10:5, had for breaking into the fold for the purpose of plundering the sheep. What some of the Corinthians had been so ready to listen to from the lips of these imposters was nothing less than *another Jesus*. Paul does not say *another Christ*, for these apostles seem to have accepted Jesus as Messiah; but their interpretation of the ministry of Jesus was so utterly contrary to what Paul had given, that for all practical purposes *their Jesus was another person*.⁵ Tasker goes on to point out that the message of these teachers might indeed have *some* elements that appear praiseworthy, i.e., their Jesus is the Son of David, and is The Messiah, but something is missing. This Jesus is not the only begotten of the Father. This Jesus did not come into the world to save sinners by his death and resurrection. “In short,” writes Hughes, “the *gospel* which these false teachers were seeking to impose upon them was quite different from the gospel they had accepted through the preaching of Paul. There is only *one* gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and upon any, be he even an angel from heaven, who proclaims a different gospel Paul does not hesitate to pronounce an anathema (Gal. 1:6ff.), for such a person cannot be other than an imposter and a minister of damnation. And such were these self-commending interlopers. Their presence threatened destruction to the church in Achaia. How, then, could Paul be expected to speak calmly of them? It was essential that by severely denouncing them and exposing their deceits he, as a faithful pastor, should warn the flock of Christ and rescue it from the peril in which it was placed.”⁶

Note: In Galatians 1:6, 7, Paul uses the same two Greek words, *allos* and *heteros*, that he uses in 2 Corinthians 11:4. According to Paul in Galatians, the message of the false teachers is fundamentally *different* (*heteros*) from the gospel he proclaimed. It is not even a distant cousin of his gospel, but rather from another family entirely.⁷ In the passage in 2 Corinthians there is not the same kind of distinction between the two words as seen in Galatians. Both adjectives mean *different* in a bad or deviant sense.⁸

CONCLUSION: Paul sets out the contours of the gospel he preached in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5: “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” The gospel centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a message about objective, historical events (see also Heidelberg Catechism 22-23). This summary reminds us of Jesus’s own words that the Messiah must suffer, die, and rise, and this message would go forth in his name (Luke 24:44-47). We benefit from this message by faith, as the similar discussion in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 also makes clear. By faith in this message – faith in the Christ and his work for us – we stand and are saved. Faith looks away from ourselves and our own works to the One whose work alone is sufficient to save us.⁹ “It was,” Hendriksen declares, “to *save* sinners that Christ Jesus came into the world. He did not come to help them save themselves, nor to induce them to save themselves, nor even to enable them to save themselves. He came *to save* them!”¹⁰ In 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Stott points out: “The Word of God is *the word of the cross* (v. 18). The *kerygma* through which God saves *those who believe* is *Christ crucified* (vv. 21, 23). It was on the cross that Jesus Christ bore our sins and broke the power of the enemy (e.g., 1 Pet. 2:24; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14), and it is therefore only by the cross that men and women are personally delivered from sin and Satan. It is Christ crucified in whom they must put their trust; it is, therefore, Christ crucified whom we must proclaim. . . . No man can save himself; only the cross of Christ can save him. Man owes everything to God. As a creature he is entirely dependent upon his Creator, and as a sinner upon his Saviour. To boast of himself, of his wisdom or of his power, is sinful folly. *God, and God alone, is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness, and sanctification and redemption* (v. 30). We have no wisdom of our own by which to know God; we need His self-revelation in Christ. And we have no power of ourselves to save ourselves; power for salvation, whether initial justification, progressive sanctification, or final redemption, is in Christ alone. Without Him we have neither wisdom nor power. Without Him we are lost. *Therefore, Paul concludes, as it is written: let him who boasts, boast of the Lord* (v. 31).”¹¹

ENDNOTES

¹ H. K. Moulton, *The Challenge of The Concordance* (Bagster & Sons, 1977), p. 214. Heinz W. Cassier renders Hebrews 4:1 this way: “Let us then stand in *anxious dread*, cf. his *God’s New Covenant: A New Testament Translation* (Eerdmans, 1989), p. 407.

² Wm. Barclay, *New Testament Words: English New Testament Words Indexed with References To The Daily Study Bible* (Westminster Press, 1964), p. 227.

³ John Owen, *Biblical Theology* (rpt. Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), p. 660.

⁴ This is how Ralph Martin renders the text, cf. his *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians* (Word, 1986), p. 334.

⁵ R. V. Tasker, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Second Epistle of Paul To The Corinthians* (Eerdmans, 1960), p. 148.

⁶ P. E. Hughes, *The New International Commentary On The New Testament: The Second Epistle To The Corinthians* (Eerdmans, 1962), p. 378.

⁷ M. S. Harmon, *Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary: Galatians* (Lexham Academic, 2021), p. 41.

⁸ cf. the discussion in *Martin*, op. cit., p. 336.

⁹ Brandon D. Crowe: *The Lord Jesus Christ: The Biblical Doctrine of The Person and Work of Christ* (Lexham Academic, 2023), p. 92.

¹⁰ Wm. Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: 1 Timothy* (Baker, 1955), p. 79.

¹¹ J. R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Eerdmans, 1961), pp. 110-115.