Have I Become Your Enemy? — Speaking the Truth in a World Bound by Deception

Paul's words to the **Galatians** — *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* Galatians 4:16

Introduction: The High Cost of Truth in a Time of Compromise

We live in a time when speaking truth—biblical, unfiltered truth—can cost you relationships, respect, and even fellowship within the church. The church today, much like the Galatians of Paul's time, has been entangled in doctrines and movements that *sound* spiritual, *look* traditional, and even claim divine authority—but they do not stand the test of Scripture.

When it's shared what the Bible says—about the truth under the New Covenant, or when exposing the emotionalism and deception embedded in some unbiblical practices—it's not done to divide or condemn, but for the love of truth more than fear of rejection. And if the willingness to speak the truth makes enemies in the eyes of some, then Paul's words to the Galatians ring true with these words, which are, *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*

So, let's explore the weight of Paul's message to the Galatians and see why it still speaks with power to our current generation of believers who are being led astray by popular yet deeply flawed doctrines.

I. Turning Back to Bondage: Galatians 4:8–11

Paul begins this section by reminding the Galatians of their former life—when they did not know the true God and served pagan idols. But now that they have come to know God, or rather been known by Him, Paul is astonished that they are reverting to old ways—ways not necessarily of paganism, but of **legalistic bondage under the Law**:

> *"But now, after that ye have known God… how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Galatians 4:9)*

He observes that they are starting to observe Jewish religious calendars—*"days, and months, and times, and years"* (v.10)—a sign that they are being persuaded to embrace Judaistic customs as a requirement for salvation or sanctification. This troubles Paul deeply:

> *"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." (v.11)*

II. Paul's Personal Appeal: Galatians 4:12–15

Having laid out his doctrinal concern, Paul appeals to their **personal relationship** with him. He reminds them how they once received him with great affection and spiritual joy, despite his physical infirmities. He asks:

> *"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" (v.15)*

This emotional recollection builds to a point of sorrow and confusion.

III. “Am I Therefore Become Your Enemy?”: Galatians 4:16

This question is the heart-cry of someone who has watched loved ones drift from truth into deception:

> *“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”*

This question is not rhetorical—it reveals a painful irony. The Galatians loved Paul when he confirmed their freedom in Christ. But now, as he exposes their doctrinal error, they begin to see him as an adversary.

This dynamic persists today. Speak truth, and you’ll likely be met with suspicion, withdrawal, or outright hostility—not from the world only, but from within the church.

IV. The Influence of False Teachers: Galatians 4:17–20

Paul then explains why this shift has happened: false teachers have entered and seduced them with persuasive doctrines that, while appearing righteous, actually enslave them once again. These men are zealous, but not for the Galatians’ good:

> *“They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.” (v.17)*

Their goal is not truth, but control.

In contrast, Paul's motives remain pure:

> *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you…" (v.19)*

His desire is not to win followers, but to see Christ formed in the hearts of those he shepherded.

V. The Burden of Telling the Truth

Paul's words in Galatians 4:16 didn't come from arrogance or pride—they came from heartbreak. He was watching a body of believers whom he had once led to the freedom of Christ now fall back into the bondage of the Law. They had embraced the teachings of Judaizers who insisted that righteousness still came through circumcision and the observance of Mosaic ordinances.

Paul told them plainly that their return to the Law was a return to slavery. And for saying this, the same people who once rejoiced at his message began to turn on him.

This is the cost of truth. It is not always well-received. The one who proclaims it may find himself alienated, misunderstood, or maligned. But that does not absolve the responsibility to proclaim it.

VI. Calling Out the Deception

A major deception plaguing today's evangelical church is **Christian Zionism**—the belief that the modern, secular state of Israel represents the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and

that its citizens are automatically God's chosen people by virtue of race or heritage.

But what does Scripture say?

> *"They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Romans 9:6)*
> *"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:7)*
> *"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)*

God's covenant people are no longer defined by ethnicity or geography, but by **faith in Jesus Christ**. There is **no promise** to an unbelieving nation simply because they are Jewish by blood. Yet, when this is said one is often accused of being anti-Semitic or of denying Scripture. But the truth is, **Scripture does not lie, and God is not a respecter of persons** (Acts 10:34). Under the New Covenant, there is **no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved** (Acts 4:12).

VII. Exposing Excesses

In similar fashion, the charismatic movement has deceived many through its claim to operate under the power of the Holy Spirit—yet much of what is seen in these gatherings is **not found in the New Testament**, nor does it reflect the orderly, Spirit-led worship described in the Bible.

From unintelligible tongues and slain-in-the-spirit episodes to grave-sucking and self-appointed apostles, we see practices that **contradict** both the Word and the character of God. These are not harmless emotional experiences; they are spiritually dangerous, often mimicking pagan rituals and leaving people open to false spirits.

We are warned to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1), and to let all things be done “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). But when these truths are brought forward in love and concern, many recoil, saying we are attacking the move of the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit does not contradict the written Word of God. He affirms it.

VIII. The Inevitable Pushback

We should not be surprised when truth offends. Paul knew this well. The Galatians once rejoiced in his message—but when he challenged their return to error, their joy turned to resistance.

So it is today. The moment you speak truth that calls people to examine their traditions, or challenges their political and religious loyalties, you risk becoming their enemy. But that risk must be taken, for truth has always been costly.

> *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10)*

IX. Why We Must Continue

There is a greater danger than being labeled divisive—and that danger is **remaining silent** when the flock is being led astray.

We are not responsible for how people respond to the truth—we are responsible to **speak it faithfully**. We do not call people to ourselves—we call them back to the **Word of God**, rightly divided 2 Timothy 2:15, and revealed through Christ.

When false teachings go unchallenged, they spread like leaven through the whole lump. We speak not to shame, but to awaken. Not to destroy, but to build up upon the only true foundation: Jesus Christ and His gospel.

X. Theological and Eschatological Reflection: A Modern Parallel

The passages from Galatians carry prophetic weight for the modern church, where many have embraced **false doctrines with deep historical roots in modern theology rather than in biblical truth**.

For instance—the Darby-Scofield Framework, a 19th-Century invention. This is one of the most damaging theological imports into the church that came in the 19th century through **John Nelson Darby**, the father of modern **dispensationalism**. He promoted a new framework for understanding prophecy, Israel, and the Church—introducing for the first time:

- A **secret pre-tribulation rapture** of the church
- A **7-year tribulation period**, supposedly the 70th week of Daniel
- A **return to God's prophetic plan for ethnic Israel**, separate from the Church

These teachings were **not** found in the early church, nor were they taught by the Reformers or Puritans. They were, rather, born out of speculative theology and **sensational eschatology**.

Darby's ideas gained enormous traction in the U.S. through the publication of the **Scofield Reference Bible** (1909, 1917), which printed Darby's dispensational notes alongside the text of Scripture—giving many the false impression that these notes carried biblical authority.

XI. A Necessary Clarification: The Priority of Salvation vs. Secondary Issues

It's important to recognize that the **central theme of Scripture is the gospel of salvation through Christ alone**. The most important doctrines are those which lead one to repentance, faith, and new life in Him. In that sense, the errors of dispensationalism or end-times theories like the rapture and tribulation **are secondary issues**—they are not salvific in themselves.

However, **secondary doctrines—when distorted—can still have serious consequences**. When misunderstood, they sow **division within the body of Christ**, foster **confusion about the identity of God's people**, and **misdirect Christian loyalty** toward political nations *(i.e. political state of Israel)* rather than toward Christ and His eternal kingdom.

And this is precisely what has happened. Due to flawed eschatological frameworks—rooted in the interpretative method known as eisegesis,[1] which reads external assumptions into the biblical text—rather than the interpretative method of exegesis,[2] the Church has been led to believe that those called Jews today remain **God's chosen people**, **even in unbelief.** This has resulted in a widespread expectation of a rebuilt temple and renewed sacrificial system, as well as support for the modern nation-state of Israel as though it were the covenant people of Scripture. However, many of those identified as Jews today are not ethnically descended from Jacob and therefore do not represent biblical Israel. These views **undermine the sufficiency of Christ**, blur the lines of the New Covenant, and **cement falsehoods as though they were truth** in contemporary Christian consciousness.

The burden of speaking against **popular error** today is when one proclaims that the **Church is the Israel of God**, that Christ fulfilled the promises to Abraham, or that the charismatic signs and wonders movement is a counterfeit spirit—you will be branded as divisive, unloving, or arrogant.

But like Paul, we must still ask: *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*

Silence in the face of deception is not humility—it is abdication. We are not called to please men, but to faithfully uphold the truth of God's Word.

XII. Concluding Final Thoughts: Let the Truth Be the Offense—Not the Silence

The context of Galatians 4:16 reveals the heart of a faithful servant who loved enough to confront, who cared enough to correct, and who grieved when his honesty was mistaken for hostility.

Today, the same courage is required. The same truth must be spoken.

- Whether confronting **Zionism** that **elevates ethnic identity** above faith in Christ
- Or resisting **charismatic excesses** that substitute emotionalism for true spiritual fruit
- Or exposing **false eschatologies** that have redirected the church's hope from Christ to geopolitical events

We must speak. Not to win arguments, but to call people back to Scripture—back to Christ—back to the gospel.

If standing for truth creates adversaries, then so be it—that

is a cost we must be willing to bear. The servant is not greater than his Master, and Christ Himself was hated for speaking the truth (John 15:18–20). Yet even if truth divides, **let it shine forth as the light that it is**—not a light sourced in any one of us, but in the unchanging and eternal Word of God. It is not *our* truth that convicts or persuades; **it is God who defines truth, declares truth, and by His Spirit reveals truth**. We are merely messengers, stewards of what has been written. And if that truth exposes error or shakes tradition, then may it do so to the glory of God and the freedom of those who will receive it.

And yet, let it be perfectly clear: **no one should force anyone to adopt another's beliefs**. What is shared is not for an opinion or a personal agenda, nor is it seeking to convince anyone by the strength of someones own reasoning. **It is an earnest prayer that God's Word, as written, would speak for itself**—that the Holy Spirit would reveal the truth to those who read or hear, and that hearts would be opened not by mans words, but by the living and active Word of God. If anyone is persuaded, may it be because **God has made it clear**, not because one tries to make a case. The role is only to speak what is written with sincerity and reverence; it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7).

If truth makes an enemy, so be it, but instead that one would come to see the light. For it is not the truth of anyone man proclaiming it, but it is God's.

> *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"*
