

AP: We often spent a lot of time trying to track down the motivations behind a person's actions. And there's value there, as it allows us to approach people as people and not simply as cartoonish villains or comedic foils. But ultimately, the motivations of the teachers in GL didn't really matter—for the end results was the same. Whether an intended falsehood or a **simple misunderstanding**, their **good intentions don't change bad teachings**.

2PT 3.15-18 ~ *And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Katie was the first of at least six known victims of what was, ultimately, a **powerful medicine, misapplied**. Through a **terrible mistake** came **deviations** from the normal **dosage** that **destroyed** the bodies, lives, and health of a half-dozen people. Sadly, the **good intentions** of the doctors didn't matter—their **simple misunderstanding** didn't change the fact that they gave a **bad dosage**. Now, the Therac-25 stands as an example of the deadliest coding error in known history—and an example of the danger that can come from unchecked error.

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Katie Yarborough's Lawyer

Today, we see error all around us—the powerful message of the Word of God improperly applied, the dosage of the Balm of Gilead applied incorrectly. And just as Paul would not accept any deviation from the Gospel of Jesus, as the current generation of the same church, neither must we. The Gospel preached here must be the same as the Gospel preached then. It's too powerful—and the consequences for error too severe—for us to accept anything else.

RV 22.18-19 ~ *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

INVITATION

2CR 13.5 ~ *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

QUESTION: Is error really that impactful?

TAGS: False Teaching/ Medicine / Galatians

TRN TO GL 2

INTRODUCTION

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Katie Yarborough – Part 1

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Katie Yarborough – Part 2

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Origin of Radiotherapy

Most of us have known someone who's undergone radiotherapy—sometimes with great success, and sometimes with unfortunate failure. But in the case of Katie Yarborough and multiple other patients of the Therac-25, it was something else. Something terrible.

BACKGROUND

The church in Galatia was sick: it had been infected by a terrible disease that was causing a terrible division—even to the point of leading the Apostle Peter astray: *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ 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?"* **(GL 2.11-14)**

When you read the Bible for the first time in faith, you can find yourself flummoxed at the divisions we see around us. **How can this one book output scores of different groups and fellowships**—all of which believe in its importance and often its inspiration—all with key differences and disagreements. Some are minor: questions of interest but of little impact (**ie: who wrote Hebrews? Is the Holy Spirit's indwelling literal or figurative?**). While others are unignorable (**ie: how does a person become a Christian? What does God expect of me? Are there 66 inspired books of the Bible? More? Fewer?**).

In truth, we shouldn't be surprised. If there was false teaching and division during the days of the apostles and inspired authors of the Bible, **why should we expect ourselves immune?** Regardless, it is sad to see. But sadder still is the trend by some to simply ignore such error.

The question of the day is, **does it even matter? Are we to find full fellowship with those who disagree not only on minor questions, but on major ones? How important is it that we "get it right"?** To answer that

question, **we must ask ourselves: what did the inspired writers of the Bible teach?**

BD1: A Powerful Medicine...Must be Carefully Handled

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Rads

Most of us have heard of the term before (and not just from Ninja Turtles). We understand it as a measurement of a dose of radiation, and we also understand, generally, that it's like golf: lower numbers are better.

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Rads - Doses

We see, therefore, that radiation is a **powerful medicine**. And as a result, it needed to be **carefully handled**. Similarly, we read continually through the Bible of the powerful healing characteristics of God's Word: *Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.* ²⁰ *He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.* (PS 107.19-20)

Like radiation, it is powerful—and **handled properly**, it's capable of powerful healing! But also like radiation, when used improperly, **this powerful medicine** can destroy instead of heal.

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 Creation – Part 1

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 Creation – Part 2

B.ILL—Paul and the Galatians **GL 5.1-3** (dealing with Judaizing teachers, who were misusing scripture to teach that a Christian had to be a practicing Jew first; needed to be circumcised) *You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.* (GL 5.4) To Paul, the answer was simple: truth must be carefully handled—for the very souls of our hearers are at stake!

AP: Brethren, this is **powerful medicine** we hold in our hands! As a result, we must ensure it is **carefully handled**. *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* (HB 4.12) Mishandled, it can do far more harm than a misaligned machine. Mishandled, it can destroy lives and doom souls.

2TM 2.15-16 ~ *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* ¹⁶ *But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,*

BD2: A Terrible Mistake – How Deviations Destroy

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Katie Yarborough Symptoms

This is every person's worst nightmare. We go to the doctor for treatment—expecting things to get better. But rather, in the case of Katie, she quickly became worse off. **Why?**

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Katie Yarborough Dosage Received

This **terrible mistake**—a matter of **deviation** in dosage—was terribly **destructive**. Because when it comes to matters of radiation, exactitude matters. It's the difference between treatment and a death sentence.

GL 1.6-9 ~ *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.*

AP: On paper, the change might seem small. **What are a few extra rads? What did it matter if the teachers in GL taught that someone should be a good Jew to be a Christian? Does it really matter?** To Paul, the answer was an unequivocal **“yes”**. When it comes to a treatment plan in medicine, **deviations destroy**—and the same is true when it comes to deviation from the gospel of Jesus Christ. So far as Paul was concerned, a change in this one area was equivalent to an all new **“Gospel”**—and this **“Gospel”** would be unable to save them.

BD3: A Simple Misunderstanding – How Good Intentions Don't

Change Bad Dosage

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Malfunction 54 – Part 1

MEDICINE/Radiotherapy/Therac-25 – Malfunction 54 – Part 2

My heart breaks at this error. This **simple misunderstanding** had proven deadly. Borne out of poor QA, poor documentation, and poor training, technician after technician had simply pressed **“P”** to skip through this deadly warning, not realizing what it meant—nor that their desire to be **“a little faster”** had caused them to basically shoot their patients with a slow-motion radioactive bullet. Ultimately, their **good intentions didn't change the bad dosage**.

GL 1.11-12 ~ *For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.* ¹² *For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*

EX: We can't be certain entirely of the motivations of the false teachers in Paul's time—perhaps they were intentionally lying and manipulating out of a desire for power. Perhaps they simply thought that Paul's teachers were just that: his teaching—eligible for argument and reinterpretation just like that of any other rabbi. But it wasn't just another teaching. The teachings of Paul were the teachings of Christ. And today, as we recount his teachings, we likewise teach, not the teachings of man, but the teachings of Christ.