

Sunday, July 16, 2023—Galatians 4:8-10 The Weak & Beggarly Elements

### Galatians 4:8

- **Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.**
- Verse 8 builds upon what Paul has already said in verses 6 and 7.
- Galatians 3:28 says that in the Body of Christ there is no more Jew or Gentile. Here in chapter 4, Paul is picking on this idea to demonstrate the inferiority of the Law for both Jews and Gentiles.
- In verses 1 through 5, Paul is showing how Israel under the Law was in bondage under the elements of the world. Therefore, why would a Jewish person want to go back under that elementary system?
- Now in verse 8, Paul turns his attention to his Gentile converts who had been deceived into following the Law.
- **Howbeit then, when ye knew not God**
- Did the Gentiles always know who God was? No. God gave them over at the Tower of Babel to their reprobate mind and suffered them to walk in their own way.
  - Romans 1:19-28—notice what the Gentiles did with the knowledge of God they possessed. They invented their own system of idolatry.
  - Acts 17:29-31—God winked at the times of ignorance.
- **ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.**
- During the times of ignorance, the Gentiles served gods of their own creation.
- I Corinthians 8:4-6—these other so-called gods are not really gods at all. There is only one true living God.

### Galatians 4:9

- **But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?**
- The expression “*but now*” places verse 9 in contrast with verse 8.
- According to this verse, when did God know the Gentiles? He only knew them after they had chosen to know Him. What are the implications of this verse upon the Calvinistic teachings that God knew you and chose you for salvation while you were still dead in trespasses and sins?

- Paul asks the Galatians the following question: “How in the world, now that you know God and have been delivered from pagan religion, can you go back to the weak and beggarly elements?”
- Weak (772)—is the idea of being feeble, sick, or without strength (Strong’s). The primary sense of the root is to yield; fail; give way; recede; or to be soft (*Webster’s 1828*).
- Beggarly—mean; poor; in the condition of a beggar; extremely indigent (*Webster’s 1828*).
- The Greek word translated “elements” is the same one found in verse 3. Once again, the Law is an elementary system because it is based upon rudimentary principles. Paul is asking these Gentiles why they would want to subject themselves to such an elementary system.
  - Colossians 2:20-22
- It is critical to follow Paul’s train of thought in this section. Paul uses the same terms to describe under the Law as he does to describe pagan Gentile’s idol worship. Consequently, following the Law for a Gentile is no different from worshipping an idol.
- The Galatians once served idols which were not real gods. By purposing to go back under elementary principles of the Law, they might as well return to worshipping the dead idols they used to serve.

#### **Galatians 4:10**

- **Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**
- This verse is clearly a reference to the Mosaic Law. Days refers to the weekly Sabbath, months to the Jewish calendar used to determine when the feasts would occur, times is a reference to the feasts themselves, and years to the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee.
- How many people today try to honor the weekly Sabbath? Many. How many people today honor the sabbatical year or the year of Jubilee? Not many.
- Colossians 2:14-17—teaches that Christ killed the Law with Him upon the cross. Therefore, it is foolish, weak, and beggarly to place yourself back under the bondage to these principles.