

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE

Galatians

Chapter 4:8-20

BACKGROUND:

- Two opposing cultures'
 - “one god” – the culture of the Jews
 - “polytheism” – the culture of the Romans
- Civil and Religious laws of each culture
 - government and religion were intertwined
 - written and unwritten “oral” laws

BACKGROUND:

- The Romans only allowed two religions to co-exist
 - Worship of the myriad Greek/Roman mythical gods
 - Judaism – the worship of the god YHVH
- Judaism's special STATUS within the Roman territories
 - Religious courts
 - Their own money (no face of the emperor)
 - Their own places of worship (Temple, synagogues)
- Evidence of that STATUS
 - Synagogues throughout the territories
 - Cornelius

REVIEW: Galatians to this point

- Galatian congregations were a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish believers
- Paul's letter was written primarily to the non-Jews, but Paul knew that the Jews would be reading it as well
- Letter motivated by the fact that some of the non-Jews were being swayed by "another gospel".
- The crux of the "other gospel" was that the non-Jews had to convert to Judaism, which implied observance to the "oral law"

REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

- “patria postestas” – the “power of the father”
 - To become an heir, you had to be “emancipated”
 - Adoption guaranteed that you were an heir
 - Paul used this example in regards to the Jews and the non-Jews

REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

- “stoicheion” – the “elements”

NKJ **Galatians 4:3** Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the **elements** of the world . . .

NKJ **Galatians 4:9** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly **elements**, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

- “stoicheion” – the “elements”

Nomos
Law
Torah
“Oral” Torah

NKJ **Galatians 4:3** Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world . . .

NKJ **Galatians 4:9** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

????

REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

“The word “elements” is translated from the Greek word “stoicheion” (Strong’s 4747) which comes from a verbal root that means “to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier”. In the noun form it means “any first thing from which others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise.” In other words, “stoicheion” are the building blocks from which something is derived. For example, our alphabet has letters that depict certain sounds, the first of which is “A”, followed by “B”, “C”, “D”, and so on in order. When we combine those letters, we make words that contain certain thoughts. When we want to speak those thoughts, we make sounds with our mouths that depict the sounds of those same letters.

REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

Our English word “elements” can refer to the fundamental particles that make up all matter - the things we see, breath, and touch. For instance, water is made from the two elements hydrogen and oxygen. Thus, the elements are the “stoicheion” – the building blocks of all matter.”



REVIEW: Galatians 4:1-7

Stoicheion

- *Noun – derives its meaning from the context*
- *Example – English word “light”*

“turn on the light”

“turn at the light”

“it’s a red light”

“let’s let in some light”

NKJ **Galatians 4:8** But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

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“alla” – “never-the-less”

NKJ **Galatians 4:8** But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

“you” – the non-Jews

NKJ **Galatians 4:8** But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

- The non-Jews had
 - participate in the cultic worship of the Roman gods
 - prayers and penance - to keep them happy.
 - Roman “feriae” - religious holidays – over 100 per year
 - Romans never “knew” their gods
 - they didn’t want their subjects to know them.
 - wanted to be pacified and left
 - their former “gods” were not even gods.
- In contrast, the Jews “knew” their God.
 - He was real to them
 - Torah made Him real – specifically history & promises.
 - The Torah was the ‘elements’, the building blocks
- 14 • Non-Jews had the opportunity to know the true God as well.

NKJ **Galatians 4:9-11** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

- The non-Jews were being called back
- They not only began to know God, but God knew them!
 - As opposed to the “pagan” gods who took no notice of their subjects

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“turn again” – epistrepho (Strong’s 1994)
used in LXX to translate “shuwb”

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weak and beggarly elements - The Torah?

- the non-Jews had never observed the Torah
- Paul always describes the Torah in a positive way

^{NKJ} **Romans 7:12** Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

^{ESV} **Romans 7:22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,

NKJ **Galatians 4:9-11** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

weak and beggarly elements - The ROMAN gods!

- consumed so much of the peoples time
- well over a hundred 'holidays' devoted to their worship,
- December 25th holiday called "Dies Natalis Solis Invicti" – the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun"

^{NKJ} **Galatians 4:9-11** But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

^{ESV} **Galatians 4:11** I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

NKJ **John 9:1** Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth ¹⁹ And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know . . ." ²² His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.*

NKJ **John 12:42** Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

NKJ **John 16:1** "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ² "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

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- Could it be -
 - Some non-Jewish believers were turning to the “other gospel”,
 - Others felt they were not welcome and were slowly moving back into the Roman culture,

The “gospel” of the perpetrators was forcing people back into idolatry!

NKJ **Galatians 4:12** Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all. ¹³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

NKJ **Matthew 23:34-37** ³⁴ "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city . . . ³⁷ " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!

NKJ **Matthew 10:16-17** ¹⁶ " Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

NKJ **Mark 13:9-10** ⁹ "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

NKJ **2 Corinthians 11:24** From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.

NKJ **Acts 20:22-24** "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

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^{NKJ} **Galatians 4:17-18** They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.

- The evangelizing “Messianic” Jews
 - Not to the Messiah, but to Judaism
 - They become 2nd class citizens
- The zeal of the ‘perpetrators’ depended on whether or not Paul was present

NKJ **Galatians 4:19-20** My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

REVIEW: Galatians 4:8-20

- Paul is trying to show them how YHVH has worked in them
 - It was through divine intervention that YHVH lead Paul to them
 - They received Paul's gospel message willingly and eagerly
- Paul understood their plight
 - Yet why go back into bondage (either to the Roman religion or the Jewish "oral" law)
 - Instead, endure the persecution that comes with the walk
- the "weak and beggarly elements" was the worship of the Roman gods as well as their associated holidays.

שְׁלוֹם לָכֶם

Shalom Alechim

Peace be Unto You