

Galatians Chapter 4

Verse 8

1. The Galatians were ensnared in the trappings of pagan religion before they knew God.
 - They were slaves to a multiplicity of false, heathen gods. Paul said that they did service to these gods, and the word "service" literally means "to be a slave."
 - They were slaves to the rules, rites, and requirements of their religion.
2. This describes the condition of so many people in the world today.
 - This is why we must be aggressive in sending forth the gospel of Christ to the nations of the world. **Romans 1:21-23** succinctly describes the condition of this world.
 - But, praise God for **Romans 1:16** - the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to **every one** that believeth!
3. Paul says that they "*did service unto them which **by nature** are no gods.*"
 - The word "nature" carries the idea of "disposition."
4. By their very disposition, these gods proved they were counterfeit and were not truly divine.
5. **Psalm 115:3-8** describes the inanimate nature of these gods. They are impersonal, inactive, and the work of men's hands.
6. But **Jeremiah 10:10-11** contrasts our God with these false gods. Our God is living, active, and powerful:
 - Creating the earth by His power
 - Establishing the world by His wisdom
 - Stretching out the heavens by His discretion

Verse 9

1. The Galatians were pagan, idolatrous Gentiles before Paul came and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. **Ephesians 2:12** is an accurate description of their spiritual state before God.
 - Without Christ - aliens from the commonwealth of Israel - strangers from the covenants of promise - having no hope - without God in the world
 - But, praise God for the next verse (**Ephesians 2:13**)! "*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*"
2. If you are saved, this is your testimony also. How thankful we should be that God, in His grace, has offered reconciliation to everyone in the world.
3. Previously, the Galatians did not know the true God, but now they did know Him. They could now address Him as "Abba, Father." vs. 6
4. Not only this, they were "*known of God.*" What a blessing to know that we are no longer in an alienated state from God (**Colossians 1:21**). We are fully reconciled and known of God.

- He recognizes us as His children and adopted sons (**Galatians 3:26, 4:6**) and we have full access into His presence (**Ephesians 2:18, 3:12**).
5. This verse contradicts the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election (that we are known by God and chosen by God before the foundation of the world).
 - These Galatians were **not** known of God until they placed their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - When the Bible speaks of being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), this is referring to God's **plan** and choice to offer salvation to every individual in the world through His Son.
 - It is referring to the formation of Christ's Body, which was a mystery hidden from the foundation of the world (**Colossians 1:24-26**), but purposed in Christ (**Ephesians 3:11**).
 - It is not referring to individual persons, but to the Body of Christ as a whole. The choice was made by God to offer grace and to save Gentiles in and through Christ before the foundation of the world.
 - Individual people were not chosen and placed in Christ before the foundation of the world. If this were the case, then they fell out of Christ when they were born physically in Adam. What a confusing mess this theology creates (in Christ, out of Christ, back in Christ).
 - Regardless of what Calvin taught, you were unknown to God, in Adam and in your sin before you heard the gospel and placed your faith in Christ. At that point you were reconciled to God and became part of a Body that God chose to create in and through His Son before the foundation of the world.
 6. Paul was amazed that the Galatians who had experienced the strength and power of God in salvation now desired to return to the bondage of dead religious rites and requirements, specifically the Law of Moses.
 7. There are many today who do the same thing. They are saved out of a religious system of works, but then gravitate to churches that desire to put them in bondage to their rules and requirements.
 8. There is something in mankind that desires to **do something** to be acceptable to God instead of resting in the full acceptance of God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:6-7
 9. But when you live a life of religious rules, it produces bondage because you can never do enough (I could have read one more chapter, prayed 10 more minutes, witnessed to one more person, given a little bit more, etc.)
 10. This is why Paul calls it "*weak and beggarly elements.*" - Any religious system whereby you try to gain acceptance before God (before or after salvation), leaves you weak and spiritually bankrupt.
 11. What is the answer to this bondage? **1 Corinthians 1:24** declares "*Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*"