

## Galatians 4:1-11 (ESV)

1 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,

2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!

7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years!

11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

# Galatians 4:8-11

## Class Notes

1. Continuation from 1-7
2. (v. 8) **Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods**
  - a. Formerly, when you did not know God
    - i. Does not say, they didn't know anything ABOUT God.
    - ii. "Know" - Oida – (Bible Hub)
    - iii. Strong's 1492, be aware, behold, perceive
    - iv. HELPS Word-studies properly, to see with physical eyes (cf. Ro 1:11), as it naturally bridges to the metaphorical sense: perceiving ("mentally seeing"). This is akin to the expressions: "I see what You mean"; "I see what you are saying."
    - v. Mental apprehension
    - vi. They knew about God but they did not understand the gospel on an experiential level.
    - vii. See 1 Thess 4:5
      1. 3 For this is God's will: that you become holy, that you keep away from sexual immorality, 4 that each of you know how to possess his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know (form of oida) God.
    - viii. They were blind to the truth of who God is.
    - ix. They were blind to what it means to be justified before God
    - x. 2 Cor 4:1-6
      1. "1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
    - xi. John 9:39
      1. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."
    - xii. Psalm 146:8
      1. the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.
    - xiii. Isaiah 42:6-7
      1. I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;  
I will give you as a covenant for the people,  
a light for the nations,

7 to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

8 I am the Lord; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

xiv. Who knows the Father?

1. Matt 11:27

- a. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

2. Luke 10:22

- a. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

b. You were enslaved

- i. Strong’s 1398 – douleuo - to be a slave, to serve  
ii. Cognate: 1398 douleúō (from 1401 /doulos) – properly, to serve as a slave, having all personal ownership-rights assigned to the owner; (figuratively) to willingly give over the prerogative to be self-governing. See 1401 (oulos).

c. To those

i. In Greek this is an article, Masculine Plural

1. Can be referring to things, concepts/principles, or beings/persons

- ii. MacArthur on 4:3 - Still others believe it refers to the basic, elemental things of human religion; and that interpretation seems appropriate in this context, especially in light of the fact that in 4:9 the same phrase is connected with the ceremonial rituals of human religion. In Colossians 2:8 Paul warns: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Here Paul clearly associates “elementary principles of the world” with deceptive human tradition and philosophy. The heart of Jewish religion during New Testament times was the system of rabbinic traditions that had superceded and stifled the revealed truth of the Old Testament. In the Gentile world of that day, human philosophy and pagan religions were closely interrelated. And both Jewish traditions and pagan religions centered in man-made systems of works. They were filled with rules and regulations, the obeying of which were thought to make a person right with deity. The elemental things of all human religion, whether Jewish or Gentile, ancient or modern, inevitably involve the idea of achieving divine acceptance by one’s own efforts. And they are elemental in that they are only human, never rising beyond the mundane to the divine.

1. MacArthur, John. Galatians MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- iii. For the Jew - Jewish religion had devolved into a man-made system of works consisting of rules and regulations that supposedly brought righteousness before God.

- iv. For the Gentiles – Whether it be the vain philosophies or the pagan deities, actual man-made images or stars, moons, etc, they lived in a man-made system of works trying to appease a deity
  - v. Thus – “those” is anything that attempts to provide a just standing before deity that is outside of Christ.
- d. That by nature are not gods
- i. If we are not worshipping the one true God, what is the nature of that which we are worshipping? Idols.
    1. Anything that is used to some way achieve a just standing before deity.
    2. **“Idolatry** is worshipping anything that ought to be used, or using anything that ought to be worshiped.” -Augustine.
    3. Physical statues
    4. Physical objects of nature (trees, mountains, sun, moon stars)
    5. Man-made philosophies
    6. Man-made rules (written or unwritten)
    7. Philosophies / ideas of man
    8. Man himself
    9. Spiritual beings (1 Cor 10:14-22)
      - a. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? (ESV)
      - b. Don't ever want to name your church First Corinthians Baptist Church
  - 10. Deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons – 1 Tim 4:1-5
    - a. Now <sup>x</sup>the Spirit expressly says that <sup>y</sup>in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to <sup>z</sup>deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, <sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of <sup>a</sup>liars whose consciences are seared, <sup>3</sup> <sup>b</sup>who forbid marriage and <sup>c</sup>require abstinence from foods <sup>d</sup>that God created <sup>e</sup>to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. <sup>4</sup> For <sup>f</sup>everything created by God is good, and <sup>g</sup>nothing is to be rejected if it is <sup>e</sup>received with thanksgiving, <sup>5</sup> for it is made holy <sup>h</sup>by the word of God and prayer.
  - ii. Idols from a Jewish perspective
    1. Written Law vs Oral Law - God had given the written Law (Torah). But the Jewish rabbis said that God, at the same time He had given the Written Law on Sinai, He also gave the Oral Law. This Oral Law was intended to explain and clarify the

Written Law. (Today we would consider this “commentary” and always under the authority of Holy Scripture.) However, the rabbis considered the Oral Law at least as authoritative as the Written Law. This is illustrated in the fact that the Oral Law would permit the transgressing of the Written Law.

a. Their oral laws were man-made idols

b. Jesus take on their oral traditions, Mark 7:8-13

i. 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.

9 And he said to them, You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! 10 For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother; and, Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die. 11 But you say, If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban (that is, given to God)— 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.

c. Let’s not even talk about the Jewish tendency for syncretism.

iii. Idols from a Gentile perspective

1. The gentiles did not have even the veneer of the Oral Law to run cover for their idolatry.

2. Nothing that they worshipped was God.

3. For example, the Roman imperial court

a. **Worship of the Roman Emperor as a god.** During his lifetime, in 44 bc Julius Caesar allowed a statue of himself to be erected with the inscription Deo Invicto (to the unconquered god) and declared himself dictator for life. His nephew and adopted son, Augustus (ruled 30 bc–ad 14), constructed a temple in Rome which he dedicated to Divus Julius (the divine Julius) and titled himself Divi filius (son of a god). Augustus and Tiberius each allowed a single temple to be dedicated to them during their lifetimes, the former in Pergamon and the latter in Zmyrna. Subsequent emperors gradually increased the influence of the Imperial Cult so that, after Hadrian (ruled ad 117–38), their power had become so absolute and so consolidated that the cult was effectively a civil religion and a test of loyalty. It was abolished by Constantine I (ruled ad 306–37), who adopted Christianity as the official religion. (Wikipedia)

4. Martyrdom of Polycarp (disciple of the Apostle John) and the Roman imperial court

a. Despite the cries of the crowd, the Roman authorities saw the senselessness of making this aged man a martyr. So when Polycarp was brought into the arena, the proconsul pled with him: "Curse Christ and I will release you."

REPLY: "Eighty-six years I have served Him. He had never done me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"

The proconsul reached for an acceptable way out: "Then do this, old man. Just swear by the genius of the emperor and that will be sufficient."  
**(The "genius" was sort of the "spirit" of the emperor. To do this would be a recognition of the pagan gods and religion.)**

REPLY: "If you imagine for a moment that I would do that, then I think you pretend that you don't know who I am. Hear it plainly. I am a Christian."

More entreaties. Polycarp stood firm.

The proconsul threatened him with the wild beasts.

REPLY: "Bring them forth. I would change my mind if it meant going from the worse to the better, but not to change from the right to the wrong."

The proconsul's patience was gone: "I will have you burned alive."

REPLY: "You threaten fire that burns for an hour and is over. But the judgment on the ungodly is forever."

The Death of Polycarp

The fire was prepared. Polycarp lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed: "Father, I bless you that you have deemed me worthy of this day and hour, that I might take a portion of the martyrs in the cup of Christ. . . Among these may I today be welcome before thy face as a rich and acceptable sacrifice."

3. (v. 9) **But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?**
  - a. But now that you have come to know God
    - i. Does not say that you have come to know ABOUT God.
    - i. Ginosko
      1. Strong's – to come to know, recognize, perceive
      2. HELPS - properly, to know, especially through personal experience (first-hand acquaintance). 1097 /ginóskō ("experientially know") is used for example in Lk 1:34, "And Mary [a virgin] said to the angel, 'How will this be since I do not know (1097 /ginóskō = sexual intimacy) a man?'"
    - ii. How do the two "knows" compare?
      1. (v.8) Paul is saying that
        - a. they didn't perceive the true God.
        - b. They were blinded by the god of this world.
        - c. Their man-mad works of religion were the entire focus of their life

2. (v. 9) Paul is saying that
  - a. They have come to know God on an experiential level.
  - b. God has revealed to them the great debt they owed God because of their sin and the great grace that is in the gospel of Christ that is capable of paying that debt for all who believe
- b. Or rather to be known by God
  - i. Did God at some time not know them?
  - ii. If so, in what context? In the relationship of justification, a salvific context.
    1. Matthew 7:21-23,
      - a. 21 Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? 23 And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.
  - iii. This “know” is from “ginosko” as well. Knowledge via personal experience.
  - iv. A **salvific relationship** which is always initiated by God **as compared to** man initiating with an idol
    1. Initially - God taking the initiative in creation and instituting a relationship with Adam
    2. Personal level
      - a. God taking the initiative to call Abram, the father of the Israelites,
      - b. God taking the initiative to cut a covenant with Abraham as he promised Abraham a son.
      - c. God taking the initiative to promise Abraham that his seed would be a blessing to the nations
    3. National level – Jews –
      - a. God taking the initiative to send Joseph to Egypt
      - b. God taking the initiative in moving Joseph from prison to the right hand of Pharaoh
      - c. God taking the initiative to call Moses from the burning bush
      - d. God taking the initiative to bring His people out of Egyptian bondage
      - e. God taking the initiative to give the Law and then the sacrificial system to point to an ultimate redeemer because the people could not keep the Law.
    4. Prophetic level – God takes the initiative to predict the coming Savior
    5. Salvific level –
      - a. God initiated and sent His only Son, the divine, to take on flesh
      - b. God initiates the relationship with all believers
        - i. John 6:41-44
          1. 41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” 43 Jesus answered them, “Do not

grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day

ii. John 15:15-16

1. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

iii. John 1:43

1. <sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. **Finding** Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

iv. John 1:47-50

1. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit! 48 Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. 49 Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel! 50 Jesus answered him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.

v. The knowing of being fully exposed before God yet still fully accepted by Him **as opposed to** work's righteousness only leading to arrogance and pride or guilt and shame

1. Jacob

- a. Gen 25 – Jacob takes Esau's birthright for a pot of stew.
- b. Gen 27 – Jacob deceives Isaac to get his blessing before Isaac died.
- c. Gen 32 – An angel comes to Jacob and initiates a wrestling match. Jacob (supplanter) wrestles the angel for a blessing. Angel asks his name. Jacob tells him, admitting who he is and not trying to hide behind lies and deception. His name is changed to Israel, "God prevails". Jacob's self-identity finally changes as he admits to what God already knows of him.

2. The woman at the well

- a. John 4:4 <sup>4</sup>And he had to pass through Samaria.
- b. Travel through Samaria was not geographically necessary; the normal route for Jews ran up the east side of the Jordan River (Transjordan). Although some take the impersonal verb had to (δεῖ, dei) here to indicate logical necessity only, normally in John's Gospel its use involves God's will or plan (NET Bible)
- c. John 4:28-30 – Why would she want to take all these people to the person who had just fully exposed her? Because she was accepted by Him. She trusted Him. She wanted to share Him.





4. (v. 10) **You observe days and months and seasons and years!**

- a. You observe – religious rituals
- b. Days and months and seasons and years
  - i. Probably referring to the Jewish religious calendar as the Judaizers were wanting them to conform to the Jewish culture.
  - ii. “During his ministry in Galatia, Paul doubtlessly gave believers the same warning he gave to the church at Colossae: “Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col. 2:16-17). “If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world,” he continues, “why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’ (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence” (w. 20-23).”

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5. (v. 11) **I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.**

- a. Different translations
  - i. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (NASB)
  - ii. I am fearful for you, that perhaps my labor for you has been wasted. (HCSB)
  - iii. I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain. (NET)
  - iv. I am afraid for you! I don't want my work for you to have been wasted! (ISV)
  - v. I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. (NV)
  - vi. I fear for you, lest perhaps in vain I have toiled for you (transliteration)
- b. Paul is not fearful for himself.
- c. Paul is fearful for the Galatians because he fully understands what the outcome will be if they do not hold to Christ.
  - i. Col 1:21-23
    1. "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister."
  - ii. 1 Jn 2:19
    1. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us
  - iii. Matt 7:21-23
    1. "'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I

declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

iv. Matt 13:24

1. 24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' "

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!