

Galatians 4: 8-14

Why Turn Back?
Part I

26 October, 2025

Sunday 9 A.M. Study in Galatians



4 . But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 . so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive **the adoption as sons**. 6 . Because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts**, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 . Therefore **you are no longer a slave, but a son**; and if a son, then an heir through God.

8. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10. You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

12. I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; 13. but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14. and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself.



OBSERVATION ON THE LAW: ITS FULFILLMENT: DUE TO JESUS' KEEPING IT OR DYING AS A RESULT OF/ UNDER IT?

John 10: 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 **and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish**; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 **My Father, who has given them to Me**, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. 30 **I and the Father are one.**" 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

Jesus claiming/ attesting His Deity

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. [John 5:18]

Jewish leader
reaction

Chief priest, officers'
applying Law of Moses on
the Lord

'MOREOVER, THE ONE WHO BLASPHEMES THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH; ALL THE CONGREGATION SHALL CERTAINLY STONE HIM. THE ALIEN AS WELL AS THE NATIVE, WHEN HE BLASPHEMES THE NAME, SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH. LEV 19:24

John 19: 6 So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate *said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." 7 The Jews answered him, "**We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God.**"



OBSERVATION ON THE LAW: ITS FULFILLMENT: DUE TO JESUS' KEEPING IT OR DYING AS A RESULT OF/ UNDER IT?

- Did the Lord Claim deity? A: Yes
- Did the Jewish Leadership correctly recognize He was doing so? A: Yes
- Did they correctly match up Jesus' claim to the correct Law of Moses? A: Yes
- Take the Lord Jesus out of this in your mind for a moment: then substitute him for a guy named Dudley Manichevitz.... Did the Jewish leadership act correctly? A: Yes?/No?/maybe?
- What did the Chief priests, Pharisees, etc. have wrong about the Lord Jesus Christ?
- We see then: the Law executed its sentence of death (fully being fulfilled) by claiming the Life of one Spotless Victim
- In Fact more than that: He is the High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek, who is a new priest of a new heavenly order, and now there must be a 'change of law also' (Heb 7:12), who with His power of indestructible life (7:16), He made one intercession for sin for all time, through His own blood (9:12), He sat down at the right hand of God (10:12), having obtained eternal redemption (9:12)
- Under the Mosaic law, we all died to it through the crucified body of Christ (Rom 7:4) Christ purchased our freedom and redeemed us from the curse of the Law and its condemnation by becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13)

Conclusion to the Observation:



What more can be done to say that:

THE LAW IS FINISHED, COMPLETE, REPLACED IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE; by the One who died to & by that Law (spotlessly), and so brought it to it's full-end stop.

God has done everything to finish it out by leading us to the Object that the law foreshadowed: Christ Himself (Heb. 8:15, 10:1)

There is no more conclusive proof than the book of Hebrews, which is the Grand Thesis on the end of the Law to all who believe.

So, we now ask the Galatians: WHY TURN BACK TO IT?

6 . Because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts**, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 . Therefore **you are no longer a slave, but a son**; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Picking up the thought from vs. 6 and 7—

The other week we saw that ‘God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the (old, completed) Law’

Now: we have God sending forth in the same manner, the Spirit of His Son

Sent forth = **exapostello**: sending out from His own Person the Spirit of Christ to represent Christ and His interests in our hearts

F.W. Grant: a child is born into the family by means of the new birth, but you can be a child of God and not have possession (conditionally) of conscientiousness of sonship. You have it, but you may not yet possess it. **A son is an acknowledged child.**

Note: that v. 6 says ‘for the reason’ you are a son, God sends forth the Spirit of Christ. First you get placed as an adopted son. Then: comes the qualification for the place, or the possession of the place: sonship fully recognized. Your frame of reference is in view (Merryman)



6. Because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts**, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7. Therefore **you are no longer a slave, but a son**; and if a son, then an heir through God.

It is not: the spirit of a son, **but the Spirit of the Son**— felt possession of Christ Himself, the full knowledge of the New Man in Christ that ‘Christ is all and in all’

Col 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. (*... no male no female... see also Gal. 3:28*)

- i. *Abba*: (Aramaic) for ‘papa’ the feeble cry of an infant (identity-trust expression)
- ii. *‘Father’*: (Greek) the expression of your identity-confidence that springs from comprehension of your identity in the Sonship of Christ, and your identification with the Father.
- iii. This you will grow into: the same expressions deep within, as the maturation process develops IN CHRIST. The Spirit of the Son will see to it!
- iv. The believer enjoys an exalted sonship-heirship position with God in Christ, not on the basis of law-works-merit, but on the basis of grace-promise-faith. [i.-iv. : Merryman]



8. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

We have to refer to the previous verses 6 & 7; for the contrast Paul is establishing in the ‘however’ ‘We are adopted sons of God, heirs according to the Promise to Abraham enjoyed by faith alone’ HOWEVER, in the time past, you Galatians, you Gauls— did not even know God factually . . . **oida**

Gauls: Celtic people (400's BC to 400's AD); coming from what is modern day France, Switzerland, Belguim, Netherlands, Germany spoke Gaulic, from Gallia

How much more ‘foreign’ to Abraham, the Jewish nation and the Law can you get from that?

These far northern foreigners were ignorant of the Hebrew God in their past

And enslaved to their gods

Imagined gods: yes, but also whomever were counterfeit spirits in those gods— demons, powers, principalities

The point of vs. 8 and 9 is: ‘How can you even think of going back to your old, enslaving pagan ways?’

OR: they were substituting their old pagan ceremonial-law-works for that of Jewish ceremonial law-works; either way is abandoning their exalted sonship in Christ, with His Spirit vitally connected to God...



9. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

BUT NOW:

Paul has taught them who God, the Father of Christ is, and they NOW have **ginōskō** knowledge
Knowledge that is attained by experience, coming to learn; meaningful knowledge

- I like this amended thought in real time Paul gives— *‘or rather you are known by/of God’*
- **mallon** is the adverb, the word modifying/amplifying ‘known’; we are ‘rather known’ by God
- But: **μᾶλλον** deeper meaning is: *‘much more’; ‘much more by far’!; ‘to a greater degree’* is how God knows us

Think of this!: God knows you way beyond what you know of Him. This naturally goes hand in hand with being a son, an heir of His inheritance, and having Christ’s Spirit in us, crying out for Him in recognition of parenthood and many times in need to be comforted, reassured, etc.

μᾶλλον is used in these COMFORTING WAYS by Jesus: *“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? . . . if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the furnace, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? [KJV]*



9. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

KNOWN of GOD:

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

³¹ Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. [MATT. 10]

You have kept count of my tossings;
You have put my tears in your bottle.
Are they not in your book?
Then my enemies will turn back
in the day when I call.
This I know, that God is for me.
[Psa 56:8,9]

*For we do not have a
high priest who cannot
sympathize with our
weaknesses...*
Heb 4:15

¹³ For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.
¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;
¹⁶ Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them. [Psa 139]

Casting all your care upon
Him; for he careth for you.
I Pet. 5:7

*. . . for your
Father knoweth what
things ye have need
of, before ye ask him*
Matt. 6:8



9. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

AGAIN, the main argument of this thought by Paul: *‘Why, why, why?’* would you turn back from this?

Paul, like us here today: are completely perplexed by their reverting (4:20)

And: not reverting, but more than that, **converting** to legalism, paganism, etc. that they had already converted from and to God in their past

epistrephō. Is turning back

James in Acts 15 uses it here: *“Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles”*.

They desired bondage again to: the **weak** and **beggarly elements** [KJV]

The ceremonial religious ABC’s of the Law or the pagan system were anemic and powerless, poverty-stricken; powerless to enrich them spiritually, or set them apart for God.

What is the source of this desire?

