

“Do You Really Want to Return to Bondage?”

Galatians 4:8-11

The peril and bondage of a “works” religion, whatever the form!

1. Their Old Life: Bondage!

v. 8

(1) They did not know God!

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

- They formerly had their “religion,” but they had no true knowledge of God!

- They were totally estranged from God.
- All religions outside of Christ are false. There is in them no worship of the true God.
- cf. Romans 1:21-23

(2) They worshipped and served false gods!

- **Whether engaged in religiously or irreligiously**
- **Works-righteousness always creates idols!**

(3) This was (and is) a condition of slavery! Why?

- Because *all* systems of “works-religion” constitute a slavery

- There can be no rest for the soul. The one you worship is the one you serve!
- One must ever strive to please the “deity,” serve the deity, appease the deity.

- Because *all* attempts to find meaning outside of Christ are futile and doomed to failure.

- Because *the only possible liberty for the soul* is found in Jesus Christ.

2. Their Present Direction: A Return to Bondage!

vv. 9-11

(1) An Abandonment of Grace!

*“But now that you have come to know God,
or rather to be known by God,
how can you turn back again...?”*

- **It is through Christ alone**
that one comes into a true knowledge of God

- Salvation is entirely determined, initiated, and secured by God!

He knew me from eternity past; He set His love upon me! Rom. 8:29
“In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us...” 1 Jn. 4:10

(2) A Turning Back to their old life!”

*“how can you turn back again
to the weak and worthless
elementary principles of the world,
whose slaves you want to become
once more?”*

- Turning back to the same old “religion!”

- cf. 4:3 “elementary principles”
- “weak and worthless” - because they give no firm ground and comfort!

- The same old “religion,” just in a different form!

*“You observe days and months
and seasons and years!”*

- The contours of old Judaism: Adopting all the OT Mosaic Law
 - “days” = sabbath-days
 - “months” = days of the new moon
 - “seasons” = the Jewish feasts
 - “years” = sabbath and jubilee years

- The observance of such they *thought* to be a way of securing God’s favor!

(3) A Fearful State!

“I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.”

- The Apostle fears that these Galatians may not be the “real thing” (“I fear for you”)
- To continue to embrace this false gospel would constitute deserting God cf. 1:6

- If they continued in this trajectory of “law-keeping” as a means for justification, it would demonstrate that they did *not* understand faith in Christ alone!

Further Application