



Religion of the Galatians

Before their salvation in Jesus Christ, the Galatians had practiced many religions such as polytheism, libations, and had worked to satisfy fallen angels or demons. Paul was concerned for the Galatians' spiritual status in Galatians 4:7-8 because they had slipped back into their pre-salvation religious practices of legalism and worshipping of false gods. Paul was afraid for them, lest his labor had been bestowed in vain. They had switched from grace to legalism.

"Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods."
(Galatians 4:7-8, NASB)

In John 8:44 and John 8:39-40, our Lord blasted the legalistic Pharisees who opposed Him as the Messiah and sought to kill Him. Jesus Christ called their legalism and Law-keeping practices (the Pharisees' form of religion at that time) as in opposition to the Old Testament Scriptures and in opposition to Jesus Christ. Their religious practices substituted God's grace and salvation by belief in the Messiah who would pay for their sins with claiming they were saved by being born a Jew and by trying to keep the Mosaic Law plus their added hyper-detailed rules from their "Oral Tradition" which were not in the Old Testament Scriptures.

"They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.'" Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. 'But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.'" (John 8:39-40, NASB)

"'You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.'" (John 8:44, NASB)

Paul had also warned the Corinthians about those who were teaching false doctrines and called them false prophets and deceitful workers in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. See category on [Legalism](#).

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15, NASB)

In Galatians 4:9-11, Paul warns the Galatians of their return to their pre-salvation religious ways. After they had accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, they had turned to the "weak and worthless elemental things." The weak elements refer to legalism, which is the production of human good or good deeds as a means of spirituality which the Judaizers taught. The Word of God teaches only one way to true spirituality - the confession of known sins to God the Father via 1 John 1:9 which results in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

"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? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain." (Galatians 4:9-11, NASB)

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)



Legalism has never had any power to save or to glorify Jesus Christ. The worthless elements refer to the Mosaic Law which had no power to grow spiritually or to glorify God. Now, they were back to a works system, observing days, months, times, and years.

They observed days (Sabbaths) with rituals and practices. They observed four different religious festivals and fasts each on a designated month. On the fourth month, they commemorated the fall and capture of Jerusalem. On the fifth month, they commemorated the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Jer. 39:2; Jer. 52:12-13.

“in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the city wall was breached.” (Jeremiah 39:2, NASB)

“Now on the tenth day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who was in the service of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the LORD, the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every large house he burned with fire.” (Jeremiah 52:12-13, NASB)

On the seventh month, they commemorated the murder of Gedaliah, the governor of the remnant of Jews. On the tenth month, they commemorated Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. Jer. 41:1; Jer. 39:1.

“In the seventh month Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and one of the chief officers of the king, along with ten men, came to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. While they were eating bread together there in Mizpah,” (Jeremiah 41:1, NASB)

“Now when Jerusalem was captured in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it;” (Jeremiah 39:1, NASB)

The Galatians celebrated Jewish feasts in the Old Testament which were rituals God's timetable for Israel all of which were pictures or shadows of the Messiah to come. The feast of the Passover celebrated the spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The feast of Unleavened Bread celebrated the fellowship of Jesus Christ. The feast of First Fruits celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The feast of the Day of Pentecost celebrated the beginning of the Church Age. The feast of Trumpets celebrated the Second Advent of Jesus Christ yet to come and the regathering of the Jews in the Land. The feast of Atonement celebrated the salvation of Israel. The feast of Tabernacles celebrated the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

All of the Jewish feasts and accompanying rituals in the Old Testament celebrated the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ to go to the Cross to pay for the sins of mankind. Salvation was in the Old Testament by non-meritorious faith belief in that future atoning work. Today in the Church Age, salvation is the same, but we look back in time at the already completed substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross as payment for the sins of mankind.

The Messiah, their Savior Jesus Christ had already come in the person and work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Old Testament Jewish feasts and rituals are no longer necessary in the dispensation of the Church Age.

The work of Jesus Christ on the Cross means is that sin is no longer an issue, but either faith belief in that work or rejection of our Lord's saving work. Human actions or good deeds has nothing to do with



salvation and never has.

They observed years such as the Sabbatical year. Every seventh year no work was done and the land was to lay fallow. The year of Jubilee was every 50th year, where all debts were cancelled, and all property reverted to its original owner. This was only to be observed in the land of Palestine.