

## Galatians 4:8-11

4:9 *“But how can it be that, on the one hand, having formerly been in ignorance of God and therefore enslaved to those who are not gods and, on the other hand, having come to know God or (which is more to the point) being known by him, you are now returning anew to those weak and bankrupt elements which once controlled you?”*

The Judaizers were not intentionally trying to enslave the Galatians.  
Nor did the Galatians consider themselves to have been drifting back into a form of bondage.

4:10 Days = Sabbath days, feast days  
Months = recurring monthly cycle such as the new moon celebrations  
(Is.1:14)  
Seasons = Seasonal events that lasted longer than a day:  
Feast of Tabernacles, Passover  
Years = Year of Jubilee

Paul then places the Jewish law into the same demonic category as Pagan rites.  
The Law came from God and is holy, righteous, and good but if used today as a means of salvation and fellowship with God it becomes a tool of satanic bondage.

4:11 “efforts” is *kopiaio* which means “to labor to the point of exhaustion.”  
It is in perfect tense which means Paul’s work of labor had been finished.

The Galatians had not lost salvation but were ignorant and in the position that Peter describes in 2 Peter 3-8,

“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

and 2 Peter 1:9,

“If anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”

4:12 The theologian Paul switches to the Pastor Paul in these verses.  
Paul begins to intensify his appeal to them on a personal basis.

**4:12-16 Paul refers to their past time together**

**4:17-20 The Galatians present condition**

4:12 Paul says “become free like me for I became like you, a Gentile.”  
Paul’s point is that if the Law was so special why did he dare leave it?

Paul is free and wants the Galatians to join him.  
Paul had entered their culture, their cities, their lives to share the truth with them

First messages in Galatia Acts 13:44-14:7

This was Paul’s ministry style. See 1 Corinthians 9:20-22

“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law, so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to

win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some.”

Paul did not stand on a special level that they had to come to, he came to them, became like them to lead them to Christ, not to himself.

Point: If we want someone to be like us (saved), then we need to make connection with them first in order to lead them.

4:13 “you have done me no wrong” from verse 12 actually is the lead in for verse 13. Paul is referring to their original meeting during his first missionary journey.

4:14 says they received him as an angel from God. Angel is *angelos* or simply messenger. He is saying they recognized him as a natural man but sent to them by God.

It appears that Paul’s plan on the first journey was not to preach in Galatia but to go elsewhere.

An unsuspecting illness made him stay there and so he preached the gospel to them.

The reason he brings this up is to show how little gratitude they owed him. He did not even want to be there in the first place, yet in that condition the Galatians initially welcomed him. Even when tempted to ignore him due to his attitude toward them and also his unpleasant illness.

4:13 “illness” is *astheneia* and means “sickness, disease, sickness, ailment.”

Literally means “because of an infirmity of the flesh (or, body).”

The word is used in:

Luke 4:40- “When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.”

Mark 6:56 – “And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.”

Luke 9:2- “He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.”

Luke 10:9- “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”

Acts 9:37- “About that time she became sick and died. . .”

Acts 19:12- “so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.”

Acts 28:8- “His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.”

1 Corinthians 11:30- “That is why many among you are weak and sick (feeble), and a number of you have fallen asleep.”

James 5:14- “Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.”

Philippians 2:26-27- *Concerning Epaphroditus an elder or pastor from the Philippian church:* “For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was

Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. . . .he almost died for work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.”

2 Timothy 4:20- “Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.”

1 Timothy 5:23- “Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”

The nature of the illness is unknown but could have been:

- Malaria from the low-lying Pamphylia
- Epilepsy from 4:14's "contempt or scorn" is literally "despise and to spit out"
- Eye disease called ophthalmia inferred from 15b "torn out your eyes and give them to me" and the "big letters" Paul had to use when he wrote in 6:11.
- Depression
- Connected to the "thorn in the flesh" of 2 Cor. 12:7
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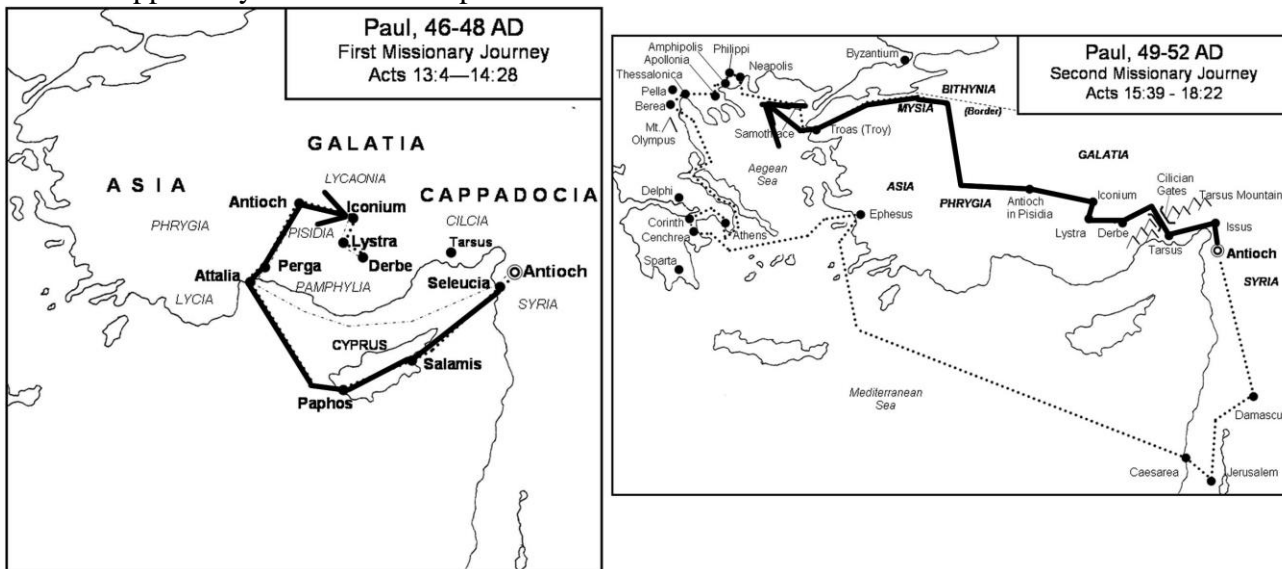
4:14 "even though my illness was a trial to you." Yet, the Galatians welcomed him and received his message. Point is they did not receive Paul because he was famous, popular, pleasant, such a nice guy, friendly, entertaining, gave them money, etc. Paul was a disgusting burden, but he had a message of truth, hope and salvation.

They welcomed Paul because of his message not his presentation of personality!

"Trial" is *peirasmon*

4:15 Now, where is their "blessing" their "joy," or *makarismos*? This word is only used elsewhere in Romans 4:6 and 4:9 where it means "an act of declaring or counting as blessed and happy."

4:16 The Galatians joy and blessing of Paul is gone because they have rejected the message they once received. They are not rejecting Paul now because he is sick or a burden. That is what he was the first time when he apparently abandoned a trip further West and turned back into Galatia.



4:17 Dishonorable motives of Judaizers. Yes, they have zeal, enthusiasm and "care about you!" but it is not good motives and not for the benefit of the Galatians.

Zeal is good when properly directed

Zeal is "zeloo" and means:

1. To envy
2. To be deeply concerned for someone to the point of courting their favor

So, "zeal" is in context the process of "courting" or "dating"

1. Paul courts them to win to Christ
2. Legalist court to enslave them for service

2 Corinthians 11:2 - The legalizers may be compared to a seducer who would alienate an engaged woman from her fiancé.

“Alienate” is literally “lock you up.”

Thus, the law locks them up and separates them from Christ.

In this locked up condition the Galatians can only serve their teachers

The Judaizers were zealously paying court to the Galatians, attempting to shut them out from the benefits of the gospel in order that the Galatians will have to pay court to the Judaizers in the future.

**False teaches want people to serve their vision**

2 Corinthian 11:3-6; 11:13

**True teachers equip people to fulfill their calling**

Ephesians 4:11,19

4:18 Yes, it is good to be sought after and courted by churches, but only as long as:

1. they are in line with Paul’s message and
2. they are in line with Paul’s motives.

Are the Galatians being courted in order to give them the Truth of the Word of God or some other message?

Are the Judaizers supporting Paul’s message and his efforts?

Point: It is not good to be eagerly sought after with honorable intentions only when I am present with you.

Others can also seek to benefit you with Bible teaching, but is that the case here? No!

4:19-20 Paul is going to have to start all over with the Galatians.

Similar to Hebrews 5:11-6:4

“Again in the pains of child birth until Christ is formed in you.”

This is not about being born again, again.

This is about “forming Christ” in them again.

“Formed” is “morphoo” and refers to the “act of giving outward expression of one’s inner nature.”

Example: The lead off hitter swung with perfect form.”

The outward expression showed the inward ability and understanding of the hitter.

The Galatians are born again with Christ inside but their outward “form” needs to be developed again.

The word “again” tells us at one time Christ was clearly and abundantly evident in their expression.

Now Christ is not seen in their lives.

The reason: The Judaizers emphasis on self effort that replaced a dependence on the Holy Spirit for production of Christ-like life.

“Christ is formed in you” has the verb “is formed” in the passive voice. This means Christ, the subject, is passively formed and not actively doing the forming.

Christ does not do it himself, but another power is forming Christ in the Galatians.

This opens the door for the remainder of the book. The life in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit forms Christ in believers

Romans 8:29

Ephesians 4:16,17

One of Paul’s burdens: Signs of Christian Growth in the believers 2 Corinthians 11:28

**This ends Paul’s personal appeal**

1. **Paul’s doctrinal argument that began in 3:6 has ended in 4:7.**
2. **He has begun an appeal to the Galatians to apply this teaching to their lives.**
3. **Beginning in 4:21 Paul is going to use an OT story as an allegory to appeal to the Galatians logic.**

Paul now begins another strategic attack by using the Rabbinical approach most likely used by the Judaizers to teach the Old Testament and draw historical facts into statements of support for their New Testament doctrine.

1. This appeal is Paul's capstone argument that uses both the Law and Abraham.
2. Paul uses an interpretive style that was used by the rabbis. This hermeneutic style involved very heavy use of symbols and allegories. Very often extreme. The Galatian Judiazers were most likely using this kind of OT allegorizing. Paul, being very familiar with this type of teaching, beat them at their own game.
3. The story illustrates and reviews all of Paul's main points:
  - a. Law and Faith are opposites
  - b. Law is bondage; Faith is freedom
  - c. Law is natural; Faith is supernatural
  - d. Law is flesh; Faith is spirit
4. Story ends with the casting out of the slave woman and so the point is to apply this to the Judiazers. Cast them out.

**4:21** Paul appeals to the Law itself to speak and verify what Paul is saying.  
 Paul and the Law both say that the Law is bondage.  
 Wuest: "Tell me, ye that are bent upon being under law, are ye not hearing the law?"

**4:22** Paul again goes with Abraham.  
 Abraham himself had two sons.  
 So the power was not in Abraham's genetics, flesh or law.  
 The power was not attainable except by the promise, the spirit, or faith.  
 "For" connects verses 21 and 22 and gives the idea, "Your desire to be under the law is not in harmony with scripture."

**4:23** Differences in the two sons (who both had the same father)

- 1) Mothers – one slave, one free
- 2) Method of conception – one natural, one supernatural.

"son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise"

or, "through the promise"  
 "dia ths epaggelias"

- a) this teaches that the promise of God called Isaac's life into being.
- b) In verse 4:29 this phrase becomes "by the power of the Spirit."

**4:24** "taken figuratively" means these historical events can be used to teach a truth.

**4:25** The word "corresponds" is the Greek word "sustoicei" and means "to file together" or "to be in the same line or row."

"sustoichei" refers to things that are in the same column such as letters in the alphabet or soldiers at attention.

This means that Paul sees in this story an allegory that has parts that can be taken out and lined up for comparison.

Hagar	Sarah
Ishmael	Isaac
Old Covenant	New Covenant
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
Judaism	Christianity

Hagar, the slave, represents the old covenant from Sinai and Ishmael represents Judaism centered in Jerusalem.

Sarah, free woman, represents the new covenant from Calvary and Isaac represents believers who are members of heaven.

Ishmael and Isaac are alike since they both have the same father.  
So, Judaism and Christianity are alike since they both originate from Abraham.

But, Ishmael and Isaac are drastically different:

1- Born of different woman. . . . .	Law or	Faith
2- Born by different means. . . . .	Flesh or	Spirit
3- Source of origin . . . . .	Works or	Promise

The question for the Galatians is who is your mother and how where you conceived?

The Judiazers recognize that the Galatians believers have a connection to Abraham just as they do.  
What they fail to realize is that:

- 1- **Believers are born of the Spirit and live by faith as a result of a promise.**
- 2- **Legalist are flesh in bondage to a law because their hope is in their works.**

**4:27** From Isaiah 54:1

This verse comes after Isaiah 53 which describes the career of the Messiah

The number of supernatural born will outnumber the natural born.

**4:28** Now we are like Isaac.

- 1. We came into being because of God's promise (word)
- 2. We have a supernatural birth
- 3. Our entire existence is the result of a promise, the spirit, and faith
  - a. Spiritual conception
  - b. New birth
  - c. Spiritual growth
  - d. Production
  - e. Rewards (glorification)

**4:29** The position of a believer who is spirit born and faith living is persecution by the natural man who lives by works (or, is a spiritual slave.)

Jesus said:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. 5:10

“Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify;  
others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.” Mt. 23:34

The apostles said:

“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you law I had, and now hear that I still have.” Philippians 1:29-30

“We sent Timothy. . .to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.”

1 Thessalonians 3:2,3

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life In Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:12,13

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

1 Peter 4:12,13

See Genesis 21 Isaac was laughed at and mocked by Ishmael  
Isaac was about 2 years old and was being weaned.  
Ishmael was 17.

Note: The laughing and mocking came not from the Canaanites but from a half brother.  
One with the same father, but existing from a slave woman.

History:

Jews, not the Pagans, killed the prophets in the OT  
Pharisees/Priest, not the Romans, crucified Christ  
Medieval church, not the pagans, killed the reformers  
Woman on the beast, not the beast, drunk with the blood of the saints

**4:30** There is no compatibility of fleshly religion and spiritual religion

Genesis 21:10 “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

The Jewish teachers would have viewed this verse and this story as God’s rejection of the Gentiles. Paul turns it to be God’s rejection of legalism (including the Jews) and giving the inheritance only the believers (including the Gentiles.)

This allegory must have infuriated the Judiazers.

Point: Get rid of the legalist in Galatia.

**4:31** There is a switch to the first person “we” from the second person “you” or “they” because this teaching includes all who embrace the truth.