

Study Notes For Galatians

(Chapter Four)

Galatians 4:1 –

- The point of this verse really is how under the Old Law they were God's children (**I Chronicles 29:10** and **Isaiah 63:16**), but they were not given the rights of an heir that we receive in Christ (**John 1:12**).
- If you get nothing else here, understand that the very least in the kingdom of Christ is greater than anyone serving the Lord under the Old Law (**Matthew 11:11**). Therefore, why would one want to go back to a Law that kept you under privileged?
- The heir is one set to inherit what belonged to the father or family member (**Genesis 15:1-4** and **Mark 12:1-9**).
- Now, in Christ, we are heirs in a spiritual manner (**Romans 8:17** and **Galatians 3:26-29**; cf. **II Corinthians 6:14-18**).
- As long as he is a child [not yet an adult or full grown]. This imagery applies spiritually (**I Corinthians 13:11** and **I Corinthians 14:20**). In Christ we are not to be children, but expected to grow up in all things (**Ephesians 4:14-15**).
- Consider David as an illustration of how one could be called Lord of all (**I Kings 1:11; 1:13; 1:31**), but differeth nothing from a servant (**Acts 4:25**). You could be great under the Old Law, but still were not as great as one in Christ!
- This does not mean we are not servants (**Luke 17:7-10**, **Romans 16:1**, **Galatians 1:10**, **Colossians 3:24**, **Colossians 4:12**, and **II Timothy 2:24-26**). We have to be humble in remembering that (**John 13:1-17**).

Galatians 4:2 –

- The point of heirs being under tutors and governors ties back to what Paul had already taught concerning the Law of Moses (**Galatians 3:19-25**).
- Until an appointed time (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**; cf. **Hebrews 8:1-13**).

Galatians 4:3 –

- The Jews, before Christ, were under bondage [a yoke] through the Law of Moses (**Acts 15:1-10**). *More on that in verse 9.
- "Elements of the world" ties to the discussion of what the Law of Moses was (**Colossians 2:1-23**).

Galatians 4:4 –

- Fullness of time (**Ephesians 1:9-11**) indicates, as the Scriptures show, God always had a timeline for when Christ came into the world (**Isaiah 7:10-16**, **Isaiah 11:1-12**, **Mark 1:15**, and **Ephesians 3:1-11**).
- God sent forth His Son (**Isaiah 9:6-7**, **Matthew 3:13-17**, **Matthew 17:1-5**, **John 3:16-18**, **John 8:42**, and **I John 4:9-14**).
- Made of a woman (**Matthew 1:18-2:11**; cf. **Romans 1:3** and **Philippians 2:5-7**).
- Made under the Law (**Matthew 5:17-18** and **Luke 2:21-22**).

- Remember, the Law of Moses was in effect through the physical life of Christ (**Romans 7:1-6**).
 - That does not mean that the things Jesus taught prior to His death are not binding today (**Matthew 28:18-20**, **John 12:48**, and **John 14:21-26**).
 - What it does mean is that His law was not fully (**Matthew 11:10-14** and **Luke 16:16**) in effect until His death (**Hebrews 9:15-17**).
 - If one was rejecting what even John taught, they were rejecting the counsel of God (**Luke 7:29-30**).

Galatians 4:5 –

- Jesus redeemed (**Matthew 20:28**, **Luke 1:68-69**, **Colossians 1:12-14**, **Titus 2:11-14**, **Hebrews 9:11-12**, and **I Peter 1:18-19**).
- From being under the Law of Moses (**Galatians 3:13**).
- To receive the adoption of sons (**Ephesians 1:5-7**).

Galatians 4:6 –

- The evidence was provided through the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:9-16**).
- This is the seal we read of (**Ephesians 1:13**; cf. **Acts 19:1-7**) for they did not have the evidence we now have through the Scriptures (**II Timothy 3:16-17**).
- Paul had already made this point, in other words, to them (**Galatians 3:1-5**).
- We should note that those who had the Spirit KNEW they did. He did not just sit idle, but cried in their hearts and guided them (**John 14:26** and **I John 2:27**).

Galatians 4:7 –

- No longer a servant, but a son (* see notes on verse 1).
- They had brought forth the promised seed as tasked to do (**Micah 5:1-2**; cf. **Hebrews 7:14**).
- Now a son (**I John 3:1-10**).

Galatians 4:8 –

- There were times (not just once) when they were God's people, but they knew not God (**Isaiah 5:13**, **Jeremiah 2:8**, **Jeremiah 4:22**, **Jeremiah 8:7**, **Hosea 4:1-6**, **John 1:10-11**, and **Romans 1:18-32**).
- During that time, they served idols (**Deuteronomy 32:15-29**).
- By nature are no gods (**Psalms 115:4-8**, **Isaiah 44:9-20**, and **I Corinthians 8:4**).

Galatians 4:9 –

- Now you have the knowledge of God (**II Corinthians 4:6** and **II Peter 1:1-4**).
- They had been set free through knowledge (**John 8:32**), why turn back?
- Rather are known of God (**John 10:27**, **I Corinthians 8:3**, and **II Timothy 2:19**).
- Really, this is the same statement (**John 10:14**).
- Now, they make an illogical decision (**Galatians 3:3**), to return back to the Law of bondage. Backwards steps are never good (**Hebrews 10:38-39** and **II Peter 2:20-22**).

Galatians 4:10 –

- Tying the previous verse to this one shows us they were using the Law of Moses as their authority for these days, months, and years (i.e. **Leviticus 23:1-25:55**).
- Had they just sought authority from the Lord Jesus they would have found that they could have, in the area of authorized liberties, POSSIBLY observed some of their former days (**Romans 14:5-7**; cf. **Acts 20:16** and **Acts 21:17-27**)...
 - ...Going back to the Law of Moses for their authority was their error (**Galatians 5:4**).
 - Then and now, it is the words of Christ from which we must draw our authority (**Matthew 7:21-27**, **Matthew 28:18-20**, **Luke 6:46**, **John 6:63**, **Colossians 3:17**, **I John 2:3-6**, **I John 5:2-3**, and **II John 1:9**).
 - The Law of Moses is now and was then dead as the source for authority (**Romans 7:1-6** and **Ephesians 2:11-17**).
- Here is a thought to ponder... Think of how they could have, as a liberty, kept some of their feasts days and included their Gentile brethren to better equip them with knowledge of Jew traditions. This would have helped in several ways (i.e. **I Corinthians 9:19-27**).

Galatians 4:11 –

- Paul was fearful that time he spent teaching them had been wasted because of their actions (**II Corinthians 12:20-21**).
- Don't confuse his concern though. He was not just concerned for his time spent (**Acts 15:36** and **Romans 9:1-3**).
- He did not want to see hard work ruined because of his love for them (**Philippians 2:14-16** and **I Thessalonians 3:1-8**).
- Failure means faithfulness at any point is lost (**Ezekiel 18:24** and **II John 1:8**).
- Remember, when teaching, it is good to assess whether or not effort will be or has been wasted (**Proverbs 9:7-8**, **Proverbs 23:9**, **Matthew 7:6**, **Matthew 10:14**, **Acts 13:44-51**, and **I Corinthians 3:1-3**).
- He was not completely giving up hope though (**Galatians 5:10**). Thus, there was work to do (**James 5:19-20**).

Galatians 4:12 –

- The word translated “beseech” here (Strong’s #1189), is also [in addition to “beseech”] translated as “pray, prayed, praying” in other Scriptures (**Matthew 9:38**, **Luke 10:2**, **Luke 22:32**, **Acts 4:31**, **Acts 8:22**, **Acts 8:24**, **Acts 8:34**, **Acts 10:2**, **II Corinthians 8:4**, and **I Thessalonians 3:10**) or “request” (**Romans 1:10**). This indicates how strong of an urging this word carries with it. Strong’s dictionary defines the term as “to beg (as binding oneself), i. e. petition: beseech, pray (to), make request”.
- Paul begged or requested them to follow his approved example (**I Corinthians 4:16**, **I Corinthians 11:1**, and **II Thessalonians 3:9**).
- Paul’s example was to leave behind the things being a Jew benefited him in and simply serve Christ (**Philippians 3:3-17**).
- He then tells them that they did not wrong him. Though had they, Paul’s mindset was not to focus on those things (**II Corinthians 2:1-5**). In fact, he even tried to

bridge gaps between other brethren who may have been wronged in the flesh (**Philemon 1:10-19**).

Galatians 4:13 –

- Paul makes the point that when he preached in the area of Galatia he was suffering through infirmity of the flesh [feebleness, weakness, sickness, disease; Strong's #769]. A study of the Scriptures does reveal that Paul suffered from some physical ailment (**I Corinthians 2:3**, **II Corinthians 11:30**, and **II Corinthians 12:5-10**).
- The “at first” could tie us back to **Acts 16:5-6**.

Galatians 4:14 –

- They did not despise or reject whatever ailments Paul had. This tells us that in the past, they had received him as a brother regardless of what he was suffering through in the flesh (cf. **Romans 12:15-16**, **I Corinthians 12:25-27**, **Philippians 4:14**, **Hebrews 13:1-3**, **I Peter 3:8**, and **III John 1:5-6**).
- Paul knew what it meant to be despised (**I Corinthians 4:10**).
- Sometimes people look at the physical ailments of people and ERRINGLY think that they must have done something wrong to get that way (**Job 22:1-30** and **Acts 28:1-4**).
- They received Paul as an “angel” [messenger; Strong's #32] of God; which he was. Inspired men are speaking God's words (**II Samuel 23:2**, **Jeremiah 1:9**, **Matthew 10:16-20**, **Mark 12:36**, **John 14:26**, **John 16:13**, **Acts 1:16**, **I Corinthians 2:9-13**, **I Corinthians 14:37**, **Galatians 1:10-12**, **II Peter 1:19-21**, **I John 2:20**, and **I John 2:27**; cf. **Malachi 2:7**).
- They received Paul even as Christ (**Matthew 10:40**, **Matthew 25:34-40**, **Luke 10:16**, **John 13:20**, and **I Thessalonians 2:13**).
- Remember that, on another level, the Apostles were representatives [ambassadors] for Christ (**II Corinthians 5:20** and **Ephesians 6:19-20**).

Galatians 4:15 –

- Paul wanted to know what had changed. Where had their previous thoughts toward Paul gone? This affect should exist between teachers and students of the word (**II Corinthians 7:13-16**).
- Paul said “I bear you record” which is essentially him saying that he was a witness to their previous affections toward him (cf. **II Corinthians 8:3**, **Colossians 4:13**, and **III John 1:12**).
- Pluck out your own eyes and given them to me does NOT necessarily infer that Paul had a vision problem. Simply put, if there is another thing that could have been meant, then one cannot state something as a necessary conclusion. This language could just infer to how willingly they were to sacrifice for Paul, as Christians should for one another (**John 15:12-14**, **Romans 9:1-3**, **Romans 16:1-4**, **Philippians 2:25-30**, **I Thessalonians 2:8**, and **I John 3:14-18**).
 - One should not take lightly the illustration of one willing to pluck out his or her own eyes. Jesus used such language to teach how far one should go

to avoid sin (**Matthew 5:27-30**) and the punishment of Hell (**Mark 9:43-48**).

Galatians 4:16 –

- This is a sad statement. The previous relationship of Paul and these brethren has been altered over what? Over him teaching them the truth? Sadly, this is not a rare occurrence (**I Kings 18:17-18, I Kings 21:20, I Kings 22:1-38, II Chronicles 24:20-21, II Chronicles 36:14-16, Proverbs 15:12, Jeremiah 20:8, Matthew 23:34, John 3:19-21, John 7:7, John 8:31-59, Acts 5:25-42, Acts 7:51-58, etc.**).

Galatians 4:17 –

- “They zealously affect you” [“court” (NKJV); “seek” [ASV]; “have warmth of feeling for or against: affect, covet (earnestly), (have) desire, (move with) envy, be jealous over” (Strong’s # 2206)].
 - Zeal doesn’t always mean good (**John 16:1-3, Acts 21:20-31, Romans 10:1-3, Galatians 1:13-14, and Philippians 3:4-6**).
 - You have to stop and ask yourself about the motives of teachers trying to draw you to them (**II Peter 2:1-3**).
 - We can see the concept of moving with envy, as it is in opposition to the truth, in events that occurred in Thessalonica (**Acts 17:1-10**).
 - Such people are persuasive (**Acts 14:19**).
 - Remember, envy [part of the definition of “zealously affect”, was a motive for why the Jews killed Jesus (**Matthew 27:11-18**).
 - Motives, such as envy, reveal a carnal mindset (**I Corinthians 3:1-3 and Galatians 5:19-21**).
- Here, explicitly, the zealous affection toward the Galatians was “not well”. Those desiring them were not telling them the truth. This is always the case with false teachers (**Jeremiah 14:13-18, Jeremiah 23:23-28, Lamentations 2:14, Romans 16:17-18, II Corinthians 11:3, Galatians 6:12-13, Ephesians 4:14, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 2:6-8, Titus 1:10-12, and II Peter 2:11-19**).
- The “not well” is further explained as “they would exclude you, that ye might affect them”. In other words, those who were courting them were trying to make the Galatians their own disciples (**Acts 5:36-37 and Acts 20:28-31**). Those false teachers pursued the Galatians zealously, but the end result is not good (**Matthew 23:15**).
- Paul’s efforts to keep brethren from false teachers were clearly a big part of his teaching (**II Corinthians 11:12-15**).

Galatians 4:18 –

- This verse and the previous are so variously translated that it is difficult to stick the points exactly. Having said that, there are various points that are true regardless of the difficulty in translation.
- Being zealously sought after is not necessarily a bad thing (**II Corinthians 4:11-15**).

- In fact, Paul himself worked hard to zealously seek after the lost even to the point of fitting in (without conforming to the world; **Romans 12:1-3**) culturally (**I Corinthians 9:19-27**), by the exercise of certain authorized liberties (**I Corinthians 10:23-33**).
- He also makes it clear that such is not always bad even if from others, when Paul is not present. Paul did not think he was the only one capable of teaching them (**Philippians 1:12-18**; cf. **I Corinthians 3:10**).
 - The qualifier is that the one teaching them must be teaching them the truth (**I Timothy 1:3-7**).
- Doing good is something Paul wanted to see of all disciples, especially when he was not present (**Philippians 1:27** and **Philippians 2:12**).
- No one could read this statement and think that Paul wants the Galatians all to himself, as his own disciples (cf. **I Corinthians 1:10-17** and **I Corinthians 3:4-9**).

Galatians 4:19 –

- The language of “my little children” (**I John 2:1** and **I John 3:18**) and “I travail in birth” is indicative of a teacher’s affection and mindset towards those he’s teaching (**Philippians 2:19-22**, **I Thessalonians 2:1-12**, **I Timothy 1:2**, and **Titus 1:4**). *Remember, they are being zealously affected by others (v. 17).
- The fact that Paul was laboring with them until Christ be formed in them indicates they are not where they need to be. Which of course is also clear from the beginning of this epistle (**Galatians 1:6**). Christians must be formed in Christ (**Ephesians 4:24**, **Colossians 1:27**, and **Colossians 3:1-10**; cf. **I John 3:1-10**).

Galatians 4:20 –

- Paul wanted to be with them in person (**Acts 15:36**, **I Corinthians 11:34**, **I Corinthians 4:18-19** and **I Thessalonians 3:9-10**).
- He wanted to change how he is seeing and talking about them as he did not want to see anyone fail (**Acts 20:28-31**, **Romans 9:1-3**, and **Philippians 3:17-19**).
- He stood in doubt of them (**II Corinthians 12:20**). He hadn’t given up on them yet though (**Galatians 5:10**).
- Should we live in such a way that our brethren would doubt our faithfulness (**Matthew 5:14-16**, **I Thessalonians 2:10**, **I Timothy 4:12**, and **I Timothy 4:16**)?

Galatians 4:21 –

- There were some in the first century who converted to Christ, but then zealously wanted to come back to the Law of Moses (**Acts 15:1-5**).
- Why would anyone want to be under the Law (**Acts 13:38-39**, **Romans 3:19-20**, **Romans 6:14**, **Romans 7:5-6**, **Galatians 3:10-14**, and **Galatians 5:4**)?
- Had they really listened to the Law of Moses they would be ready for Christ (**Isaiah 7:14**, **Isaiah 11:1-11**, **Jeremiah 23:5-6**, **Isaiah 53:1-12**, and **John 5:46-47**) and the New Covenant (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**; cf. **Hebrews 8:1-13** and **Hebrews 10:1-18**).
- Moses and the prophets prophesied clearly about Jesus (**Luke 24:44** and **Acts 3:18-26**; cf. **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**).

Galatians 4:22-23 –

- God promised Abraham a son and that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (**Genesis 12:1-7** and **Genesis 22:18**).
- Abraham and Sarah erred in trying to accomplish a promise God made through their own wisdom. This caused nothing but problems (**Genesis 16:1-16**).
- This bondswoman [Hagar] and her son [Ishmael] were later cast out (**Genesis 21:1-21**).

Galatians 4:24-31 –

- An allegory [a figure (Strong's); story that can reveal a hidden meaning (Oxford New World Dictionary)] (cf. **Matthew 13:10-16** and **Matthew 13:34-35**).
- The physical Jerusalem is not the source of salvation. In fact, it was going to be destroyed (**Matthew 24:1-34**).
- It is the Heavenly Jerusalem wherein they should have been seeking salvation (**Hebrews 12:22-23**).
- “For it is written” (**Isaiah 54:1-8**).
- The children of promise is not about the flesh, just as just being Abraham's seed did not make Ishmael the heir (**Romans 2:28-29**, **Romans 9:6-9**, and **Galatians 3:26-29**).
- As Ishmael did to Isaac (**Genesis 21:9**), so the Jews are now doing to their brethren the Gentiles (**Galatians 2:11-15** and **I Thessalonians 2:14-16**).
- The bondswoman was cast out. Where does that leave those Jews who refuse their Gentile brethren and the Law of Christ (**I Corinthians 5:1-9**, **II Thessalonians 3:6**, and **II Timothy 3:1-9**)?
- Aren't the Gentiles fellow-heirs (**Galatians 3:14** and **Ephesians 3:6**)?