

It is hard to believe good news and keep believing it.

The Galatians, before knowing Christ, had a background of relating to their “gods” based on fear, superstition, and performance-based acceptance. You never knew if your religious acts would be enough to please the many deities that they imagined existed, that they had projected as existing. Their “gods” (c.k. I Corinthians 8) were unpredictable and capricious. It caused a slavery of the heart and mind. They related to their gods as slaves and had no idea, at that time, that by knowing the only true God they could be in a close relationship as sons and daughters; all because of what Christ had done for them on the cross and verified by His resurrection.

But now they were saved, and saw many wonderful things in their lives as a result of knowing Christ. They had given a great and practical expression of the new faith inside them when they ministered to Paul in his physical illness years before.

But now several had been fooled into thinking something must be missing in their relationship to God, because the Jews had followed Paul and had been teaching them that they were not complete in Christ. The Jews wanted them to practice aspects of Judaism, such as circumcision.

They were being told that just knowing Christ was not enough, that external things needed to be done to really be complete. It was a new slavery! It threw them off because it sounded different, in terminology anyway, than their old pagan religious acts and rituals because it was Jewish. In reality it called them back to a pattern they had been in before, in their days of paganism. The gospel is by grace alone, through faith alone and trying to go back to Law will not work at all. The gospel is to be “received” not something to “achieve” on one’s own effort.

Galatians 4:9 “Come to know God? „no really it is to “Be known by God”

Paul wants to stress that the action was God’s to pursue us, because of His great love for us. We were helpless to change. No amount of self-effort could have saved us, nor will it keep us saved.

Paul Little- (summarized statement) “All other religions are like a set of swimming lessons to a man in the process of drowning. Christ is like a life preserver laid within our reach by faith.”

Romans 3:9-12 / 8:5-8 / 5:6-11 An impossible situation

Galatians 4:12 “ I Paul, the one who could brag about how well I was excelling in the keeping of the Law, (Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:4-6), abandoned the self – effort of trying to be right with God in my own strength by observance of the Law and turned to Christ, trusting what He did FOR ME, have now put myself in the same position as you are as gentiles. I only have Christ and I know that will be enough. (Ck. Galatians 2:15-16, 19, 21). How is it that I abandon what I once had as a Jew (the heritage of the Law)? because it could not save me, and became like you, who have nothing but faith (no Jewish background) to receive what was offered in Christ. How is it **now** that you want to “add to” the finished work of Christ and in essence be like I was before knowing Christ; lost, prideful, religiously righteous but dead inside?” (Ck. Romans 7:1- 8:4)