

“Now That Ye Are Known Of God”

“But now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage once again? Ye observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain” (Gal. 4:9-11). Paul’s statement here involved a “correction” of something he had said immediately before. It was not wrong that these who formerly were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods (they were idolaters) had not known God; they had not known the Ruler of Our World. They were as the Athenians who had built an altar to an “unknown God” and to whom Paul said *“... ye worship ignorantly”* (Acts 17:24). Through Paul’s preaching, the Galatians had been enlightened. They had come to know God. Still, Paul amends his statement to *“or rather to be known by God”* because while his former words were correct, the more important of the two thoughts was that God had come to know them!

Every Bible student is aware that Paul’s word *“or rather to be known by God”* in no way implies that prior to this God had been oblivious of them. The very nature of God in that He is omniscient demands the rejection of that notion. Jesus emphasized God’s omniscience when He chided his hearers for their anxieties about worldly cares. He said, *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father ...”* ((Matt. 10:29). God knows each of us; is aware of us and holds us accountable for every deed we do in the body which He could not do were He not aware of us (Ps. 139:1-12; 2 Cor. 5:16). It is not consciousness of the existence of the Galatians which Paul had in mind when he said *“or rather to be known of God.”* He does not mean that any more than Jesus meant he is unconscious of some who will be rejected at judgment where he will say, *“I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt. 7:23). He will have known them for he will know they have worked iniquity, but he does not approve of this! The Galatians, by hearing and obeying the gospel had met with God’s approval. He knew them! Those whom God has come to know ... to approve ... had been known by God separate and apart from the works of the law. They had been forgiven. They had become sons of God through their faith in Christ when they were baptized into him (Gal. 3:26f). The Jews had been in bondage until the fullness of time came that they should be delivered from that bondage by God’s own Son (Gal. 4:3f). Now Gentile Christians were being convinced to go back to the law and seek justification therein. The bondage they were yielding themselves to was the same bondage Jews had been under before the advent of Christ. It was bondage to the law ... which law could not free them from the bondage of sin and death (Rom. 8:2f). Paul does not mince words as he describes that

enslavement: "*weak and beggarly rudiments*" is what he calls that law. It was weak in that it could not make perfect (Heb. 7:18). It was beggarly in that it reduced those who were heirs and sons of God to the status of a servant, a slave.

Paul's concerns for these Galatians were real. Clearly already they were observing days, months, seasons and years (4:10). They were not fully gone, but they were in the process of removing from him who had called them (Gal. 1:6f). They were enamored by the overtures of Judaizing teachers and their infatuation blinded them to the deadly danger they faced for infatuation often dulls the hearer to the somber warning of those who know where their direction will lead them. Would these Galatians hear Paul? He was fearful. "*I am afraid of you lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain,*" he wrote (Gal. 4:11). Next: "Am I Become Your Enemy ...?"

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