

Finding Freedom in Christ

Galatians 4:8-20

“No Turning Back” (Lesson #7)

Verse 8: “slaves to those who are not gods”- The issue of idols

Col. 3:5-6 “What is earthly in you?”

An idol is anything or anybody that gets what God alone deserves

“Grace will save a man...but it will not save him and his idol.” A.W. Tozer

Verse 9: Turning again to WEAK (poor, feeble), WORTHLESS (bankrupt, beggarly) WORLD SYSTEM

Verse 10: This turning is evidenced by “observing days, months, and times and years”

Consider the Jewish Calendar

Consider the Feasts and Festivals

- A. The term “feasts” means “divinely appointed times.” Each feast “recognizes a specific aspect of God’s saving work.”
- B. There are 7 feasts outlined in Lev. 23
 1. The Passover
Held on the 14th day of the first month...commemorating the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt. The blood of the lamb split on the door posts of their homes allowed the death angel to pass over them.
 2. Unleavened Bread
Starting on the 15th day of that same month, this feast lasted seven days. The unleavened bread symbolized the absence of sin as the children of Israel left Egypt.
 3. The First Fruits
Held soon after the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, this festival acknowledged the great bounty found in the land God gave the Israelites.
 4. Pentecost (Feast of Weeks or Feast of Harvest)
Celebrated the grain harvest and occurred seven weeks after the Passover celebration.
 5. Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)
This feast marks the beginning of the new agricultural year. It helped dedicate the anticipated harvest to Yahweh.

6. The Day of Atonement

This is the most holy day in the Jewish calendar. There were 15 sacrifices offered and the scapegoat was also released. The sin of the people demanded these rites of purification.

7. Tabernacles (Feast of the Ingathering)

This feast commemorated the period of wilderness wandering that the children of Israel did after leaving Egypt.

C. Many consider the Sabbath Day as one of the feasts. It is included in Lev. 23:1-44. Sabbaths occurred weekly, monthly, every seven years and every fifty years (the Year of Jubilee).

D. The required pilgrimages are emphasized in Deut. 16:16:

All Jewish men were required to make a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem for these three feast days:

Feast of Unleavened Bread

Feast of Pentecost (Weeks)

Feast of Tabernacles

E. Feasts during the exile and Intertestamental Period:

Purim (or Feast of the Lots)-See the book of Esther

Feasts of Dedication (or Feast of Lights) or Hanukkah- relates to a Jewish historical event that occurred during the time of the Maccabees.

F. Feasts were practiced by the early church:

Christ was crucified on Passover (Matt. 26:2, Mark 14:1-16, John 18:39)

He is called the Passover lamb in I Cor. 5:7.

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon men in Acts 2

G. The Psalms were clearly a part of the Feasts. For example: Ps. 114 was a liturgical text for Passover. Ps. 50, 65, 67, 76 were all related to the Feast of Tabernacles.

H. The Feasts are also seen as PROPHETIC. They "offer an eye towards the future." They "speak of the redemptive work accomplished by Jesus Christ."

Note the Spring Feasts:

The Passover reflects the death of Christ (I Cor. 5:7, Jn. 1:29). The Feast of the Unleavened Bread speaks of His burial. The Passover custom of burying/hiding some of the bread and then "resurrecting" it suggest how Christ was "hidden" in the ground (Rom. 6:4). The First Fruits symbolize the resurrection itself (see I Cor. 15:20-23). Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) denotes the birth of the church 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead (Acts 2:1-4).

Note the Fall Feasts:

** The span of time between the two clusters of festivals reflects the church age.

The Feast of Trumpets announces the Lord's return at the rapture (Joel 2:1, Matt. 24:31 and I Thess. 4:16). The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) suggest the start of the Great Tribulation (Jer. 30:7). And the Feast of Tabernacles reflects the second coming of our Lord and ushers in the millennial reign (Zech. 14:16-19, Matt. 24:30).

- I. New Testament Christians are NOT required to keep these feasts, but knowing about them can enhance a believer's walk. Keep in mind that Jesus kept every one of them without fail, even on the night before His death.

Verse 13: Consider Paul's illness:

Likely this is a physical illness. Some have suggested that it was malaria, or Malta fever or epilepsy or a chronic ophthalmia. Paul referred to it as a "thorn" in the flesh in II Cor. 12:7-9.

It very well may have been a condition of the eyes. Paul did use an amanuenses (secretary) to write most of his letters (See Rom. 16:22). But note his comment about the large letters in Gal. 6:11.

So What?

Paul's concern is for them to grow in Christ. He wants NO U-turns! He doesn't want them get sidetracked in their faith.

At one time, Paul and these churches had a wonderful, personal relationship. But they began to attack the messenger and worked to alienate the other Galatian converts. This kind of behavior is an accurate picture of what happens when someone stops growing under the gospel and begins to "nit-pick" their church, their pastor, their small group members or their mentor.

And in a more organized fashion, that is just what cults attempt to do today.

Verse 18: So, yes, be zealous but make sure your zeal rests in truth and that your motive for that zealousness is pure.

Verse to memorize: Phil. 3:13-14

Tips for Studying God's Word:

Look for things that are repeated. In the book of Galatians, for example, Paul refers to these folks as "brothers." Why does he repeat that expression so many times in this epistle? What is he trying to convey "between the lines"?

The Jewish Calendar

The Jews used two kinds of calendars:

Civil Calendar—official calendar of kings, childbirth, and contracts.

Sacred Calendar—from which festivals were computed.

NAMES OF MONTHS	CORRESPONDS WITH	NO. OF DAYS	MONTH OF CIVIL YEAR	MONTH OF SACRED YEAR
TISHRI	Sept.–Oct.	30 days	1st	7th
HESHVAN	Oct.–Nov.	29 or 30	2nd	8th
CHISLEV	Nov.–Dec.	29 or 30	3rd	9th
TEBETH	Dec.–Jan.	29	4th	10th
SHEBAT	Jan.–Feb.	30	5th	11th
ADAR	Feb.–Mar.	29 or 30	6th	12th
NISAN	Mar.–Apr.	30	7th	1st
IYAR	Apr.–May	29	8th	2nd
SIVAN	May–June	30	9th	3rd
TAMMUZ	June–July	29	10th	4th
AB	July–Aug.	30	11th	5th
*ELUL	Aug.–Sept.	29	12th	6th

The Jewish day was from sunset to sunset, in 8 equal parts:

FIRST WATCHSUNSET TO 9 P.M.

SECOND WATCH9 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT

THIRD WATCHMIDNIGHT TO 3 A.M.

FOURTH WATCH3 A.M. TO SUNRISE

FIRST HOURSUNRISE TO 9 A.M.

THIRD HOUR9 A.M. TO NOON

SIXTH HOURNOON TO 3 P.M.

NINTH HOUR3 P.M. TO SUNSET

*Hebrew months were alternately 30 and 29 days long. Their year, shorter than ours, had 354 days. Therefore, about every three years (7 times in 19 years) an extra 29-day month, VEADAR, was added between ADAR and NISAN.

38 JEWISH FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

NAME	MONTH: DATE	REFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
Passover	Nisan (Mar./Apr.): 14-21	Exod. 12:2-20; Lev. 23:5	Commemorates God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.
Feast of Unleavened Bread	Nisan (Mar./Apr.): 15-21	Lev. 23:6-8	Commemorates God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. Includes a Day of Firstfruits for the barley harvest.
Feast of Weeks, or Harvest (Pentecost)	Sivan (May/June): 6 (seven weeks after Passover)	Exod. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21	Commemorates the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. Includes a Day of Firstfruits for the wheat harvest.
Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 1	Lev. 23:23-25 Num. 29:1-6	Day of the blowing of the trumpets to signal the beginning of the civil new year.
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 10	Lev. 23:26-33; Exod. 30:10	On this day the high priest makes atonement for the nation's sin. Also a day of fasting.
Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Tishri (Sept./Oct.): 15-21	Lev. 23:33-43; Num. 29:12-39; Deut. 16:13	Commemorates the forty years of wilderness wandering.
Feast of Dedication, or Festival of Lights (Hanukkah)	Kislev (Nov./ Dec.): 25-30; and Tebeth (Dec./Jan.): 1-2	John 10:22	Commemorates the purification of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 BC.
Feast of Purim, or Esther	Adar (Feb./Mar.): 14	Esther 9	Commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people in the days of Esther.