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<http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

Personal Study of the Bible-87

Galatians 4:8—"No gods," Satan, vs Total Truth

Galatians 4:8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

When you did not know God: Before regeneration, by faith alone in Christ alone, the Galatians really *did not know the true God* (read Romans 3:9-18 for description of unregenerate). However, with the grace of regeneration they came into a personal relationship-knowledge of God. Why would they want to give that up to go to another system of religion? Prior to salvation they were no different than the legalistic Jews who, by trusting in the Mosaic Law, attempted to gain merit with God with their own works. Both the Galatians prior to Christ as well as the Jews prior to Christ were enslaved, one to the Law and the other to the idols of the Greco-Roman Empire. Paul is entreating them to stay with the grace in the Christ-centered life. In effect, he is saying, 'Why leave religionism of idolatry to move into freedom only to go back to the slavery of religionism, even if a different and moral type, like the Mosaic Law and self-righteousness? Stay with grace!'

To those which by nature are no gods: Paul is appealing to the Galatians not to return to the slavery of religion and to being enslaved to those which by nature are no gods. The Roman Empire was filled with a plethora of gods. But the reality is that they were not really gods at all. Aphrodite and Zeus could not help them, let alone provide them with the needed grace, because they were not real. In other words, Paul is pointing out that prior to salvation, the Galatians were under the slavery of religion of the Greco-Roman pantheon. If they go back to the slavery of the Mosaic Law, they will be returning to system than cannot provide the grace needed for salvation or the spiritual life. Paul is exhorting them to stay with God's grace found only in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

A few principles.

1. Satan has a plan for your life with goals of s_____, k_____, and d_____ you. All of this activity is directed at your spiritual life. Lucifer will do anything and everything to keep you from being saved *and* once saved from growing in progressive sanctification (growing spiritually).

a) Satan seeks to keep every person from being saved: Salvation-1, by faith alone in Christ alone—salvation from the eternal Lake of Fire. Read the following passages in this brief description of Hell: *Jesus taught that Hell is a place (Matt. 24:51; Luke 16:28; Rev. 21:8) to be avoided at all costs (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30). Christ taught that it will be a place of enforced separation from His presence (Matt. 7:23; 2 Thess. 1:8-9). As a place of darkness, its only sounds will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12). Hell is a fate far worse than one's physical death (Matt. 10:28) and will contain punishments varying in severity (Matt. 11:22-24). Hell will consist of 1) total absence of God's grace;*

2) endless domination of sin; 3) endless pain and suffering in body and soul; 4) experiential pain of anguish, despair, weeping, gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8:12; 13:50; Mark 9:43, 44, 47, 48, Luke 16:23, 28; rev. 14:10; 21:8). Evidentially, there will be degrees in punishment of the wicked. This follows from such passages as Matt. 11:22; Luke 12:47, 48; 20:17).

- b) Satan seeks to destroy every believer's spiritual life through heresy. All heresy contains some element of truth. So, the issue for the believer must always be the whole truth, total truth! Only the whole body of revealed truth and natural truth can provide a defense against all of his wicked power. Apart from a grounding in philosophical realism, the believer is certain to twist the Word of God, unknowingly. I have demonstrated this repeatedly in Bible class and will do again in our next Bible class. We must be grounded in Reality and correspondence truth. Read and reflect on the various passages on demonism and doctrinal deception: Gen. 3:4-5; Matt.5:13; 24:24; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Cor. 10:19-22; Gal. 5:20; 2 Peter 2; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; James 3:15; 1 John 2:16; Rev. 3:14-22; 13:11-18

How does one know if he is living in deception? While there are many characteristics of a healthy spiritual life, I would say that the best way to know if you are living in deception is your love for truth, the whole truth, correspondence truth. If you truly love truth then you will love God, the plan of God, and the things of God above all else. True love for truth is always accompanied by constant adjustments in the life to God's truth standard. This love for truth always translates to loving truth for its own sake, which is much different than loving [=using] "truth" for pragmatic or religious reasons.

Whole Truth, Total Truth, matters!

Pastor Don