

Galatians Unearthed Part 9: 4:7-15; Observing Days, Months, Seasons, and Years; Paul's Infirmity. (2/18/ 2018)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApxbZHWshYU>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a written document. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in the red text. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

We are going to continue in chapter four of Galatians. I was hoping we would finish this chapter today, but there is a passage we will cover today that is very important. This verse is so critical you'll be hard-pressed to find another verse in the New Testament that has left a mark like this one in regard to, and not in a good way, building walls. This is concerning rebuilding the wall Yeshua tore down between the Jew and Gentile. This verse has left such a negative mark that unfortunately there's no way I could spend enough time on this today if we try to cover all of chapter four. So we are really going to dig into this verse today.

Last week we ended at Galatians 4:7; that is where we are going to pick up today—⁷ **Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** ⁸ **But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.** Paul is talking to the Galatians and taking them back to the time before they were in the faith. He is trying to remind them of that time period when they had patterns of behavior, certain things they were practicing, and beliefs that were inventions of man's mind. They were clinging onto these things. That is how they lived their lives. So Paul takes them back to that time reminding them of these things.

Going on to Galatians 4:9—**But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements.** Paul is reminding them they were not in the faith. He tells them, “Now you've come into the faith, but what are you doing? You're turning back to the weak and beggarly elements.” I want to be very clear on this. When you go into the Greek, what you see is they are turning to things that do not profit. They are turning to worthless things that make no difference against the indulgences of the flesh. These are things that have no power against the enemy who is coming to steal, kill, and destroy. These things are profitless; they have no value.

We then learn something else. They're not just harmless because Paul goes on to say—**to which you desire again to be in bondage (Galatians 4:9)?** That's frightening because these things they're grabbing hold of are leading them off a cliff.

So the question is, what are they're observing that are weak and beggarly? What is taking them off this cliff? Paul tells us as we continue in Galatians 4:10-11—¹⁰ **You observe days and months and seasons and years.** ¹¹ **I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.** This is what they are observing. This is what they're falling into. The **days and months and seasons and years** are the weak and beggarly elements.

Now here's the interesting thing before we really get into this. We know the primary thrust of this

epistle is the controversial issues of circumcision. The Pharisees were going out telling Gentiles they can't be saved unless they are physically circumcised. Now guess what we learn right here? We learn there is a subtext. There are other things. Do we really think these believing Pharisees rolled into town and only said, "You're not circumcising. Go get circumcised. Have a nice day. We are leaving now"? No. They came in and brought a lot more with them, and Galatians 4:9-11 is evidence of that. This is the subtext we're getting to see. There were other things the Pharisees left. There was a remnant, a residue, teachings the Pharisees presented, and the Galatians were grabbing hold of it. But it leads us to ask the question, "What do they mean by observing days, months, seasons, and years."

Let's be honest. When you look at this, it sounds pretty straightforward. It appears Paul is talking about days being Sabbaths, months being New Moons, and seasons being the feasts of the LORD. And guess what? This is how this passage is traditionally understood. This is how Christians for millennia have looked at this verse.

To help you appreciate this and feel the gravity of Galatians 4:10 and the impact it has made in the Church, let me share with you a little bit of history. I want to take you to the letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians. There is a debate regarding the time of the letter being the first century or second century. There is even debate about whether or not Ignatius even wrote the letter. However, none of that matters. What we do know is this is clearly early Christian thought. Here is the statement—[Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner](#) [He says "after." Pay attention to the verbiage here.], [and rejoice in days of idleness; for he that does not work, let him not eat.](#)

So you look at this—[let us no longer keep the Sabbath](#). Where do you think they got this idea from? I will tell you it is explicitly from Galatians 4:10. That is where their statement derived from. That is why they are proclaiming— [no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner](#). I want you to understand something. All these things such as Sabbath, New Moons, festivals, Yom Kippur, and Pesach in Christianity today are viewed as Jewish. They are not viewed as Christian; they're very un-Christian. This is the divide between Jew and Gentile. Do you see this? Therefore, this is the way Christians look at Galatians 4:10. This has had a powerful impact on the Church.

Let me take you to the Council of Laodicea and show you how this reverberates throughout history. This council took place in the fourth century. [CANON XXXVII It is not Lawful to receive portions sent from the feasts of Jews or heretics, nor to feast together with them.](#) That is very interesting. They are lumping Jews and heretics together. It was a very Christian thing to do in the fourth century. The key thing is you're not to receive any food from their feast such as Passover.

Let me continue by showing you the next Canon. [CANON XXXVIII It is not Lawful to receive unleavened bread from the Jews, nor to be partakers of their impiety.](#) This idea comes directly from Galatians 4:10. The way men have interpreted this verse has left a big mark on Christianity. It is incredible!

I will show you one more Canon. [CANON XXIX CHRISTIANS must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the LORD's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians.](#) [Trying to separate the Jew from the Gentile by calling it a Jewish Sabbath. They are telling them if they observe the Sabbath, they are Judaizing.] [But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.](#) To get this idea, they are turning to Galatians 4:10 and pulling the [weak and beggarly](#)

elements to mean these things are going to pull them into bondage. Galatians 4:10 is where the verbiage comes from.

Let me show you the Visigothic Professions. You want to talk about nailing it; look at this—[We will not practice carnal circumcision, or celebrate the Passover, the Sabbath or the other feast days connected with the Jewish religion \(Visigothic Professions, 653ad\)](#). Where does this idea come from? Galatians 4:10. Who can imagine the power of such a little verse and the impact it can have on the Church?

Let me take you back in the first week when I shared with you some commentary from John Chrysostom regarding how he views the issues that were happening in Galatia. [Some of the Jews who believed, being held down by the prepossessions of Judaism, and at the same time intoxicated by vain-glory, and desirous of obtaining for themselves the dignity of teachers, came to the Galatians, and taught them that the observance of circumcision, Sabbaths, and new-moons, was necessary, and that Paul in abolishing these things was not to be borne \(John Chrysostom, 1889. Commentary of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Galatians Anonymous & G. Alexander, Trans. In P. Schaff \(Ed.\), A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series, Volume XIII: Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians\)](#). This concept is pulled from Galatians 4:10.

So it is interesting. Circumcision was a real issue, and Paul and others dealt with that issue. But what was the other thing that had to be dealt with? [You observe days, months, seasons, and years \(Galatians 4:10\)](#). This is the other thing that had to be dealt with. Look at this tiny verse hidden in this little epistle and how profound impact it has had on the way Christians look at and understand the Bible. It has literally impacted the way they practice the faith and how they walk it out. This is amazing! That's why I'm saying I couldn't possibly spend enough time on Galatians 4:10 today considering the havoc it has cost, how people look at it, and how they have traditionally looked at it over and over again.

Now, the question remains, what is Paul talking about? What is Paul really conveying to the Galatians? Is he telling them, “No, you should abandon the ship. You should not observe the Passover, Yom Kippur, New Moon and such because they are bondage)? Is that the truth? Not exactly. What do I mean by that? Well, let me explain.

If we attempt to walk away with Christendom's traditional take away from Galatians 4:10, I'm going to tell you right now you're going to have a significant problem. That kind of understanding is not consistent with Scripture. It's completely inconsistent. You need to remember the cornerstone for good biblical exegeses is consistency. So when you are reading the Word of God, and you interpret it a certain way, you should be able to support your interpretation and understanding with the totality of the Bible. It has to be consistent. We don't get to start tearing pages out of our Bible because we don't like something.

When I think about that, I think of Ian McKellen. I read this article on him that talks about how when he goes into hotels he rips out all the passages that talk about homosexuality. He leaves the rest of the Bible intact, but he tears those pages out. We, as Christians, can look at something like that and think it is terrible, but Christians have been doing that for hundreds and if not thousands of years. That goes all

the way back to the first century Christians who were basically tearing pages out of the Bible. That, however, is not good biblical exegeses. We may not like what the Bible says, but we have to deal with it. Amen?

In fact, I could spend the next couple weeks doing nothing but offering evidence to show the common understanding of Galatians 4:10 is not appropriate. It can't be because there are contradictions everywhere in the Bible. For example, last week we were reading in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 where Paul command the Corinthians to keep the Passover. Paul is specifically talking to the Gentiles and telling them—⁷ **Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast (emphasis added)....**

Understand Paul is talking to Gentiles and commanding them to keep the festival of Passover. Do we really believe for one second he commanded the Galatians Gentiles something completely different from what he commanded the Corinthian Gentiles? If that is what Paul is doing, something is wrong. Let us not forget what Yeshua said. He was having the Passover meal with His disciples, and He tells them, “As long as you do this—**do this in remembrance of Me (Luke 22:19).**” In other words, it wasn't to seize upon His death and resurrection. It was to go on—as long as you do this, do this in remembrance of Me.

Read Revelation and Matthew 8:11. We are not just going to keep the Passover in this age; we're going to keep it in the age to come. That is powerful! So I could show you much more from Christian history regarding the attack on the Jewish festival like Passover. I just showed you a glimpse of Christians stating we are not supposed to do these things, and we have been called to a completely different thing based on Galatians 4:10. This is where you have an interpretation problem.

What about the Sabbath? Is Paul telling us in Galatians 4:10 we are not supposed to keep the Sabbath? Again, if this is how you interpret Galatians, you have a significant problem because in the New Testament, per page, the Shabbat is mentioned more than in the Tanakh (Old Testament).

When we read the New Testament, where are the people on Shabbat? They are in the synagogues listening to the Torah being read. What is the expectation of the Gentiles given in Acts 15:21? The expectation was they would be in the synagogues listening to the Torah. The expectation was explicit and could not have been defined more beautifully. This was the specific command given not to proselytes or Jews. It was given to Gentiles in that they were to observe the Sabbath.

Look what you find in Isaiah 56:3-8 ³ **Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, “The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”; Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.” ⁴ For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs [those] who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, ⁵ Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off. [He is talking about receiving eternal life. Specifically, he is talking about Gentiles observing the Sabbath] ⁶ Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant—⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,**

And make them joyful in My house of prayer....⁸ The LORD GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, "Yet I will gather to him *Others* besides those who are gathered to him."

In other words, this is prophetic in that God is going to take Gentiles and graft them into Israel, and the reminder is, "Keep the Sabbath." So this is what I'm talking about as we're looking at this traditional take away regarding Galatians 4:10— **You observe days and months and seasons and years**. You cannot possibly understand it traditionally as it is being sold. We cannot buy it; there are contradictions in Scripture.

Given all that, we still have an issue regarding what Paul means when he says—**You observe days and months and seasons and years (Galatians 4:10)**. The way I want to start answering that is to take you to commentary and offer this commentary as a springboard to a particular passage in the New Testament I want to focus on. Before we get into this, I want to be clear on something. The commentary I'm about to show you is not a Jewish commentary, messianic commentary, Hebrew roots commentary, or a variation thereof. This is explicitly a Christian commentary, and I want to show this to you because it identifies something that is so critically important about the text. This is something that makes a significant difference on how we actually draw this interpretation, and how we understand what Paul is saying.

This commentary comes to us from the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. It is explicitly regarding Galatians 4:10—**You observe days and months and seasons and years (emphasis added)**. This is what is said— **The whole meaning of the verse depends on the sense attached to this word, παρατηρεῖσθαι [you observe]**. If you want to understand what Galatians 4:10 is all about, you need to understand the word παρατηρεῖσθαι. That word is the key to unlocking the understanding of the Galatians 4:10 verse.

The commentary goes on—**It is compounded of a verb [τηρέω] which means to observe and a preposition [παρά] which implies that either the purpose or the method of observation is bad**. Did you get that? This is in the negative context. This is not good. The commentary continues—**The simple verb and corresponding noun are commonly used in N. T. in a good sense, . . . but the compound is never so used**. In other words, this is never used in the positive context. So when we're reading Galatians 4:10, it is fundamentally understood the Galatians are screwing up. There is something wrong here. We need to understand that first and foremost.

It continues—**St Paul is not condemning the observance of 'days and months and times and years' but their misobservance (emphasis added)**. This is a major game changer! We're talking about altering Church history right here with this statement. Paul is not condemning this concept of keeping days, month, season, and years. It is the misobservance of it. In other words, there's something about the way they are doing it that is wrong. There is something they're inheriting while they're doing this that is wrong.

Continuing—**Compare Colossians 2:16, where not the simple observance is condemned**. This is absolutely breathtaking! So here this commentary recognizes something critically important. It says, "Let's look at the other Scriptures. Let's look at what Paul also says to the other people in different

epistles. Let's see if this lines up. And the answer is, no! The traditional understanding that we are banned from keeping Sabbath, the festivals, Pesach, and so forth cannot be the understanding because in Colossians 2:16, Paul doesn't condemn the simple observance. Do you see the beauty of this? Do you see the beauty of Scripture in that it confines you from derailing and getting yourself into what you now see, which is a wall as high as you can see that is dividing the Jew from the Gentile? We can trace this back to Galatians 4:10. Again, you cannot measure the damage that has been done through misunderstanding this one little passage.

The commentary continues—but the slavery which is involved in its being required for salvation, and the dishonour which is done to Christ by adding to His perfect righteousness. There is clearly no exemption here from the obligation of the observance of 'the seventh day'. Did you hear that? There is no exemption here from the obligation of observing the seventh day; we are supposed to do this!

Now here's where it gets interesting. Remember this is Christian commentary, so we kind of get off point here. 'The Law of the Sabbath, i.e. of one weekly day of holy rest in God (the seventh in the Jewish, the first in the Christian Church). Now again, this is Christian commentary, and I agree with everything pertaining to the primary thrust of this commentary. It is unbelievable! It is fantastic! It is right on point. But this last point is off. Again you can see the baggage we have inherited over the years and how it saturates into the mind, and the result is the commentary has brought separation. But it's interesting in that he calls it the observance of the seventh day, not the first day. So isn't it interesting when people get caught in this, when you're not standing in full truth, you will do what? You will contradict yourself. There will be a contradiction.

Continuing—it was instituted in Paradise. The commentator is talking about Sabbath being instituted at creation. Adam and Eve observed Sabbath in the garden when the world and mankind were perfect.

Moving on—incorporated in the Decalogue on Mount Sinai, put on a new foundation by the Resurrection of Christ, and is an absolute necessity for public worship and the welfare of man'. Wow! You want to talk about commentary! But here's the thing, it's not done. Now we're going to come to the clincher—What St Paul condemns is the observance of the day in a legal spirit, in compliance with the minute and childish prohibitions of the **Rabbinic system** and as a matter of merit with God' (emphasis added).

We had to go a long way to get here, but this is the point. This is the reality behind Galatians 4:10. Do you want to know what Paul is condemning them of? Then pay close attention to what this commentary just said because it is dead on. The Galatians were embracing a rabbinical system of commandments as a matter of merit with God. Paul is not condemning them for observing days, months, seasons, and years. He is not condemning them for observing the Passover or the Sabbath. He is condemning them for taking on these rabbinical enactments like a boat takes on water. This is why he's condemning them.

If you think about it, the Christians kind of backed themselves into a corner on this because they also have issues. Guess what those issues are? They celebrate Christmas, Easter, and Sunday Sabbath. They are observing days and months. This is the reality. Those things are just like these rabbinical

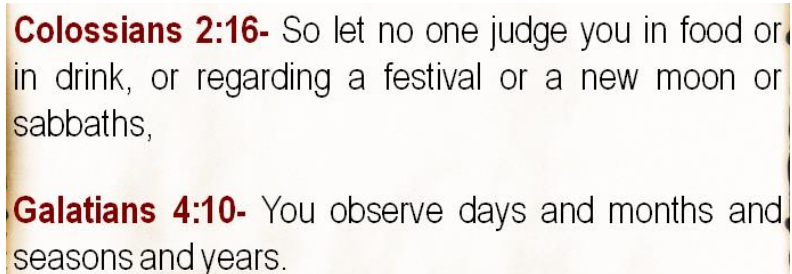
enactments. But we won't go down that road at this time.

So when we look at this passage in Galatians 4:10, understand this is the context. The weak and beggarly elements are those very things which were imposed by the rabbis and Pharisees who were going out teaching unless you're circumcised, you can't be saved. That is not all they said. Then they started to load these traditions which Yeshua said are hard to bear, but the Pharisees themselves will not lift them with one finger. They bind heavy burdens that are hard to bear.

Here's why they are weak and beggarly and without profit. It is because they are of no value against the flesh. They are of no value for you against the true war we're having and against attacks of the adversary as he comes against us and against our mind. They are of no value when Satan literally seeks to destroy you and get you to curl up in a ball and stop following after God. Satan sows fear in your heart because he is the master controller. I'm going to tell you right now those rabbinical actions are not going to do you a bit of good, but the Word of God will, because it is powerful! Where the Word of the King is, there is power. That is profitable. This is the issue we have to deal with.

Now to help you further appreciate this, I want to take you to the actual passage quoted in the commentary, Colossians 2:16. I want you to see Paul has some things he says here first hand. What we want to do is stack Galatians 4:10 next to Colossians 2:16 because you will see there's this perfect symmetry. In other words, Paul is telling the Colossians the very same thing he is telling the Galatians. Again, this is going to help us so we can understand what was being said and what was not being said.

Colossians 2:16—**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a New Moon or Sabbaths.** So there we have terms the Apostle Paul is using such as festivals, New Moons, and Sabbaths. This is a mirrored image of what Paul used in Galatians 4:10.



Colossians 2:16- So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Galatians 4:10- You observe days and months and seasons and years.

Now you may look at these two verses and say, “Daniel, these two verses are not an exact match. There is a little bit of difference. Paul doesn't use the term Sabbath; he doesn't use the term New Moons.” Let me say this. When many of the scholars approach this, there isn't a doubt in their minds what Paul is referring to in Galatians 4:10. They recognize Paul is referring to Sabbaths, New Moons, feast, and sabbatical years. Let me help you understand why they realize this. When you look in the Tanakh, you understand Paul's structure, his format, and how he lays out this verse is identical to what is laid out in the Tanakh. So that kind of kills the argument.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. 1 Chronicles 23:31—**and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts (emphasis**

added). Keep in mind Paul is an expert in the Law. He is an expert in the Torah. This guy knows his Scripture. Is it a coincidence he lays out Sabbaths, New Moons, and feasts in the exact same order as days, months, and seasons?

I Chronicles 23:31- and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD;

Galatians 4:10- You observe days and months and seasons and years.

So when Paul does this, it isn't even a question what he was dealing with. We are dealing with the Sabbath, New Moon, and feasts.

Moving back to Colossians 2:16—¹⁶ **So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a New Moon or Sabbaths.** The first thing I want to point out here is Paul warns them—**let no one judge you.** What does that tell you? It tells you they are observing these things. They are eating food and drinking at these festivals because they are to be celebrated. They are going to be keeping Sabbaths and identifying with the Jewish calendar. Therefore, Paul sends a warning, “Don't let man come against you. Don't let them judge you.”

He continues in Colossians 2:17—¹⁷ **which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.** In this statement, Paul shows they are prophetic. Even eating and drinking is prophetic. When you look at the New Testament, this isn't a question. Look at the marriage supper of the Lamb in Matthew 8:11. The Gentiles are going to come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to eat a meal in the Kingdom of God. The Sabbath is prophetic. Passover is prophetic. Yom Kippur and Sukkot are prophetic. It is all prophetic, and it is all about One, the Messiah Yeshua. All these festivals are centered around Him. The meal we're going to be eating in the Kingdom yet to come is going to be centered around the Lamb of God and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now dropping down to Colossians 2:20 because I want to get to my point—**Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations.** Now I want to show you Galatians 4:9 along with this.

Colossians 2:20- Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—

Galatians 4:9- But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

I want you to see both verses are talking about the same thing. This is the same pattern in both epistles. In Colossians, Paul says—you died with Christ. In other words, you have come into the faith away from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations. He tells them they are going back and subjecting themselves to regulations. He says the exact same thing in Galatians 4:9—But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God [they are in the faith], how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements?

So they are turning back. And what is interesting is the words principles and elements are the same Greek word, *στοιχεῖον*. The English words used in these two verses are different, but it's the same Greek word.

So the only point I want to make here is these are parallel statements with the very same context. That is very important as we continue in Colossians 2:21-22—²¹ "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle." So he's getting to where he is telling them not to let anyone judge them pertaining to Sabbaths and eating and drinking. Then we come to the—²¹ "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," ²² which all concern things which perish with the using--according to the commandments and doctrines of men (emphasis added)?

So Paul is not telling them they can't keep the Sabbath or eat and drink things. He is actually saying there are rabbinical enactments that have been attached to all these things. That is the commandments and doctrine of men. All you need to do is pull out your Talmud and start looking at things like Sabbath, feasts, food, and drink. What you will find is a plethora of rabbinical enactments attached to these things, which are what Paul is dealing with regarding these commandments and doctrines of men. That is exactly why at the end of the commentary we read—What St Paul condemns is the observance of the day in a legal spirit, in compliance with the minute and childish prohibitions of the Rabbinic system (emphasis added, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges).

It is these things that were added to the commandments of God but were thought to be religiously profitable and necessary. They did this to the point that if you do not wash your hands before eating your food, you rendered your entire body unclean. In fact, the rabbis take it so far as to say you need to be excommunicated if you do not wash your hands, which helps you understand Matthew 15:20. That is why it was considered such a grievous error when Yeshua's disciples were eating bread with unwashed hands. It was because tradition says you were to be cut off from the family of Israel if you did those things. It is purely a commandment of men.

So you need to understand these were not being presented as tradition type things that you do if you felt like it. That was not what was being conveyed. What these men were going out conveying and telling the Colossians and Galatians was weighty.

Therefore, when we look at Galatians 4 this way, and through the lens of Colossians 2, Scripture really starts to take shape. Paul is not saying Sabbaths are bad and we should avoid Passover or Jewish months like the plague, as the Christian Church has established. All you have to do is look at the Christian writing to see it has been directed to state there is to be no association with the Jews, their feasts, or to the Jewish Sabbath. According to the Christian Church, it is all anathema.

Even to this day, you see the residue of what was built and established. There are Christians who really don't have a clue about Passover. They will tell you they have heard about it but really don't know

much about it. Ask them about Yom Kippur, and they don't even know what that is. Do you see how far removed from this and how high that wall has gotten?

With that out of the way, I want to move on in Galatians 4 and get as far as we can today. Going to Galatians 4:12—**Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.** It is interesting because Paul says the same thing to the Corinthians in 9:22—**I have become all things to all people.** There was a purpose for him doing that. **That I might by all means save some.**

So Paul is reminding the Galatians how he came in among them, he came in humbly. And again, he is pleading with them now is the time to turn. It is interesting how he says—**I urge you to become like me.** He first tells them he became like them, but now he tells them it is time they become like him and come back to what he originally delivered to them.

Galatians 4:13-14—¹³ **You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.** ¹⁴ **And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.** This is an interesting passage. You will notice, right off the bat Paul was not some G.Q. stylish, latest hairstyle, and trendy clothes wearing preacher. That is not who he was. In fact, if he were alive today and going out preaching, no one would pay attention to him at all. That was because he was essentially repulsive to look at. In his second letter to the Corinthians in chapter ten, he says his bodily presence was weak, and his speech was contemptible. This means he was a horrible speaker. Yet his letters are weighty and powerful. You need to think about that concept regarding how the LORD takes those who look like the off scourging of the world and uses them to mock the proud. Paul is that character.

So up to this point in Galatians 4, Paul has been vehemently rebuking the Galatians. But now we have reached a turning point. Now he's being gentle to a point, and he is commending them. He tells them, "You guys have done well. Do you remember how you received me?" This indicates he wasn't readily received because of his physical appearance or contemptible speech. He would try to get words out; he probably mumbled them. Do you remember, from Scripture, Moses was the same way? He was a horrible speaker to the point God had to give him Aaron because Aaron was a good mouthpiece.

So here we have the situation with Paul. Paul commends them for receiving him. It wasn't just they received him; they received him as an angel of God. Not just that, but they received him as if Yeshua himself had come to them. You could not possibly commend them better than he did. That is the love, openness, and willingness with which they had begun. They had begun in the spirit, but they had derailed.

Now, regarding Paul's physical infirmity. I want to talk a little bit about this so we have a better perspective and can feel the weight of what Paul was going through, and why he was going through it. There's a little bit of a debate regarding what he was dealing with. There are commentaries all over the place suggesting he had epilepsy, malaria, or other things. I don't subscribe to any of these suggestions, but here is the interesting thing. While we may not say for certain exactly what Paul was dealing with, Paul gives us some real insight into what he was dealing with. It had something to do with his eyes. How do we know this? Because of what he says next in Galatians 4:15—**What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.**

Think about that statement—**you would have plucked out your own eyes**. Paul makes that statement intentionally in conjunction with his infirmity. He literally makes these statements back to back, so there's no question here there's something going on with his eyes. We don't know what that was; there could have been goop pouring out of his eyes. That certainly would not have been enjoyable to look at. Whatever it was, we know his infirmity was out in the open for people to see.

Now I want to build into this by taking you to 2 Corinthians for a moment because he's going to unpack this infirmity he's talking about to the Galatians. 2 Corinthians 12:7—**And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations**. I want to stop right here because I have got to tell you you need to appreciate the writings of the Apostle Paul. He tells us he was given an abundance of revelation. Paul's own letters show us God supernaturally gave him something very few men on planet earth, at the time, possessed. That was an abundant amount of revelations. This wasn't revelation regarding where the stock market was going. This revelation had everything to do with the Kingdom of God. So what I am telling you is, you need to reread Paul's epistles because there is extreme value to them because of all this revelation that was given to him. But I'm going to tell you, it came at a price. Because of the abundance of Revelation given him—**a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7)**.

Think about this. Here you have a man who goes out, and cloths are being taken from him and taken to other people to cast out evil spirits and supernaturally heal them. The dead are being raised, and he is doing all these things. Yet he is afflicted by this demonic spirit. He was given this affliction—**lest [he] be exalted above measure**.

Makes you look at things differently regarding those who may be suffering from tribulation in their flesh. You want to be careful not to judge that person because there are many people in the faith who will say that person doesn't have faith to be healed. I caution you because that's what you would say about the Apostle Paul today. You would not realize God was keeping him humble because of how much of the Spirit of God has been poured on him. That is a huge cross to bear? For the sake of the Galatians, this is the cross he bore. He bore being afflicted by a demonic spirit.

If you think it wasn't a big deal, he goes on and says in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9—**8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the LORD three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore most gladly I will rather **boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me**. Paul was begging for it to be taken away. It was something Paul really could not handle. He hated it. Yet Paul recognized the LORD's strength is only made perfect in weakness.

That should give you a completely different understanding when you are going through trials and tribulations. This is why Paul told the Romans—**3 we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4)**. In other words, there is a refining process. To those who fear God, to those who call upon the name of Yeshua, you will be stripped of your pride, bitterness, and all these ugly things the world puts into your heart. Those are the things the enemy wants to sell to you.

When you face these things, it's amazing how quickly you find people get a different perspective. I've known so many people who have gotten cancer. You get cancer, and you will develop a perspective regarding what matters, what's real, and about turning back to God and crying out to Him. It's fantastic

to see! I don't wish cancer on my worst enemy. It is a horrible experience, but the fruit that comes from that experience can't be denied.

The LORD would not take this from Paul, so his ministry was being plagued by a demonic spirit afflicting him with discomfort, but he readily accepted it. That is the power of God. That is the power of the gospel that can go forth. That is the sacrifice, and this is what Paul is expressing to the Galatians. This is what he gave up and went through so they could be saved.