

SLAVERY TO THE LAW?

GALATIANS 4:8-11

TURNING AGAIN TO THE WEAK AND WORTHLESS ELEMENTS

by Avram Yehoshua

[THE SEED OF ABRAHAM](#)

A number of Christians are realizing that the Church's heretical practice of *illicit SEX* (an acronym for the keeping of Sunday, Easter and Xmas that also includes an anti-Mosaic Law lifestyle), is *not* the Way of Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus). As Lord of the Sabbath (Mk. 2:28) Yeshua never hinted at Sunday, Easter and Xmas, let alone spoke of them after His resurrection, and none of His Apostles did either, including Paul.

Most Christians today have an aversion to Mosaic Law because they have been taught by their pastors that it's been done away with by Christ at His death on the Cross.¹ These pastors have a number of New Testament proof texts to support their anti-Mosaic Law position and their ability to keep Easter instead of Passover, just as the Pharisees had in their perverse understanding of God's Word.

Galatians 4:8-11 is one such passage of Scripture that offers Christians succor against the Sabbath and the Passover 'of the Jews,' etc. As theologian Frederic Rendall points out, the Apostle Paul condemns,

“the adoption of these practices” (i.e. the days and months, etc. of Mosaic Law that he sees spoken of by Paul in Gal. 4:10) “by baptized Gentiles: for this imputed to them an inherent sacredness *incompatible* with the true freedom of the Spirit.”²

By juxtaposing the 'true freedom of the Spirit' against the days, months, seasons and years in Gal. 4:10, Rendall neatly sums up Christian understanding about Mosaic Law, but he fails to realize that true freedom in Christ is not license to sin (cf. Rom. 6:1f.), and Mosaic Law just happens to be God's Way for Christians to know what sin is.³ Be that as it may, according to most Christian theologians and pastors, Paul came against the “days and months and seasons and years” of Mosaic Law when he rebuked the Galatians in 4:10 for observing them. The passage in Galatians 4:8-11 reads:

⁸“But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.”

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 worthless *elements* (Greek στοιχῆια *stoykay'ah*), to which you desire **again** to be enslaved?”

¹⁰“You observe *days* and *months* and *seasons* and *years*.”

¹¹“I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” (Galatians 4:8-11)

¹ “Christ nailed it (the Law) to the Cross” is not an uncommon phrase used by Christians who speak of Col. 2:14. See [Nailed to the Cross—Col. 2:14](#) to understand just what was nailed to the Cross.

² Frederic Rendall, W. Robertson Nicoll, Editor, M.A., LL.D., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Volume Three: *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), p. 177.

³ Paul writes in Romans 3:20, “Therefore, by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the (full) knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις *epignosis*) of sin.” In other words, the Apostle Paul is saying that without Mosaic Law one cannot fully know God's definition of sin.

In his commentary on Galatians, James Boice teaches that Paul is speaking about the Jewish Sabbaths, new moons, the Feasts of Israel and the Jubilee Years of Mosaic Law, respectively.⁴ Boice writes:

“In view of the context of the struggle in Galatia, *there can be little doubt* that the observances the Galatians were succumbing to...were *Jewish observances*.”

“‘Days’ would refer to sabbath days...”

“‘Months’ refers to celebrations tied to *the recurring monthly cycle*, such as those connected with the appearances of the *new moon*...”

“‘Seasons’ refers to seasonal events of more than one day’s duration—the feasts of Tabernacles, Passover, etc.”

“‘Years’ *most naturally* refers to the recurring years of Jubilee.”⁵

It’s true that the context of Galatians, chapters 2–5, has to do with Paul warning the Galatians not to be (physically, covenantally) circumcised in order to be justified or saved; for in adding circumcision, symbolizing the keeping of Mosaic Law, to their faith in Christ (which is what the Pharisaic Christian Judaizers taught; cf. Acts 15:1, 5f.) one loses their salvation (Gal. 5:4). Boice, though, launches off into Christianity’s perverse understanding of what a Judaizer is, meaning that anything of Mosaic Law is not God’s will and wrong for Christians because, as most Christians would say, ‘God did away with Mosaic Law at the Cross.’ Be that as it may, Boice is certain (“there can be little doubt”) that Paul’s *days*, etc., are *Jewish observances* of Mosaic Law. This is horrendous scholarship because there is no *direct* connection between the four terms and Mosaic Law. For example, ‘days’ is not a word in Greek for the Sabbath, and Boice offers no biblical evidence to support his “certainty.” The four terms are not inherently Jewish, but general terms, some of which are used in say, speaking of a Feast of Israel or the Roman feast of Saturnalia, and Israel was certainly not the only country that kept time by new moons, which began their new months as most, if not all ancient peoples did.

Boice, though, is not alone in his *opinion*. Well respected Lutheran scholar R.C.H. Lenski differs only slightly with Boice over definitions, but he also sees the four terms speaking of Mosaic Law:

“‘Months’ are often referred to” (as) “new moons, but these” (i.e. new moons) “are (just single) ‘days.’ *Months* (the Greek term) *signify entire months*, such as the seventh month, Tisri (sic), called *Sabbath month* since its first day was treated like a Sabbath; also Nisan, the first month, which introduced the Jewish church year and was distinguished by the Passover. The *καιροί* or ‘seasons,’ as distinct from ‘days’ and ‘months’ on the one hand and from ‘years’ on the other, are the *seasons of prayer and fasting prescribed by the law*. The ‘years’ refer to the sabbatical year and to the interval of years. It would be speculative to conclude that a sabbatical year was in progress at the time when Paul wrote. *His meaning is that the Galatians had accepted the Jewish system as far as it was marked by these terms referring to time*. The Galatians had been under Judaistic influence for only a brief period, yet had begun the observance of time; how many Sabbaths, etc., they had already kept is immaterial. The tense of the verb means that the Galatians were launched upon this *Jewish legalism*.”⁶

Lenski is right to exclude new moons from *months* because new moons signified only the first day of a new biblical month, not the entire month, but then he turns around and states that *months* speak of an

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, author; Frank E. Gaebelin, general editor; J. D. Douglas, associate ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Zondervan, 1990), (Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 55,193.

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 55,199.

⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, Lenski’s Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961; Accordance Bible Software), p. 214.

entire month, such as the seventh month, “Tisri” (Tishri), which he calls the Sabbath month, yet this is neither a biblical nor a Jewish term for the first day of the 7th month⁷ or the 7th month itself, nor can one include Nisan in this category, the first month of the biblical year because its first day wasn’t a holy day (i.e. an annual Sabbath day like the first day of the 7th month), and Passover was 14 days later, beginning in the middle of the first biblical month. In other words, *months* cannot mean the whole months of Tishri and Nisan just because they have feasts that last about a week in the middle of those two months. One didn’t keep nor observe the whole month. Also, no Jew speaks of them that way, but even if they did, Paul doesn’t write of “Sabbath months,” but only of “months.” This is a huge leap of presumption on Lenski’s part.

Another problem with Lenski’s teaching is that there are no “seasons of prayer and fasting” prescribed by Mosaic Law. There is only one biblical (Mosaic) fast day (the Day of Atonement; Lev. 16; 23:26f.), not many. We catch a glimpse into his, and many other Christians’ thinking, when Lenski states that keeping the days, etc., of Mosaic Law is *legalism*. The equation of Mosaic Law with legalism is a perverse and heretical teaching that permeates Christianity. Jesus kept all the laws and rules of Mosaic Law all His life and was never legalistic about it. Rather, He was obedient to the words and ways of God His Father.

Kenneth Barker has a different understanding of the “days,” which he thinks speak of the 7th day Sabbath and the Day of Atonement. He additionally says that the Pharisees kept them for justification:

“the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement (tenth day of Tishri; see Lev 16:29-34), which had never been, and can never be, in themselves means of salvation or sanctification; *months and seasons*, such as New Moons (see Num. 28:11-15; Is. 1:13-14), Passover (Ex 12:18) and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:10);” and “*years*, such as the sabbath year (see Lev. 25:4). The Pharisees meticulously observed all these to gain merit before God.”⁸

Whether the legalistic Pharisees observed Passover, etc., to gain merit before God is a moot point because Barker has not established *days* as pertaining to the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement, nor the *months*, etc., as from Mosaic Law. Just saying they are Jewish does not make them so.

Frederic Rendall states, also without biblical evidence, that the four terms of v. 10 reflect, “The observance of Sabbaths and new moons, of feasts and fasts, and sabbatical and jubilee years.”⁹

Alan Cole, though, writes that the four terms of time could apply to Mosaic Law or to *paganism*. They might speak,

“to the liturgical calendar of orthodox Judaism, with its sabbaths, ‘new moons’ and ‘sabbatical years,’”¹⁰ but...“*they could equally well...refer to the quasi-magical observance that we know to have been rife in Ephesus and, presumably, in other parts of Asia Minor, too...pagans certainly practiced these arts...in all forms of paganism there is some form of ‘casting horoscopes,’ with consequent ‘lucky’ and ‘unlucky’ days*”¹¹ (and months).

As Lenski brought out, the term *months* should not be applied to new moons because new moons only speak of one day, not all the days of the month, and no one has presented any evidence to support *days* as meaning Sabbaths or the Day of Atonement. Therefore, Cole’s point is well taken as the four terms fall squarely upon pagan days and months, etc., because Paul never once speaks of Sabbaths, etc., and these Christian Galatians were *returning to their former ways*, as Paul clearly states.

⁷ Lenski offers no reference where he found the term ‘Sabbath month’ for Tishri.

⁸ Kenneth Barker et al., eds., *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985; Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 23,576.

⁹ Rendall, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 177.

¹⁰ R. A. Cole, M. Th., Ph. D., Author; Leon Morris, M. Sc., M. Th., Ph. D., General Editor, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Galatians* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), pp. 164-165.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

David Stern realizes that *days*, etc. can mean pagan days. He writes that an alternative interpretation is,

“‘days, months, seasons and years’ of this passage do not refer to Jewish things at all, but to pagan Gentile feasts, *naturally and directly reflecting* ‘those weak and miserable elemental spirits.’ According to this understanding” Paul “was worried that his ex-pagan converts might be *returning* to these pagan festivals.”¹²

Stern insightfully brings out the ‘natural’ link between these units of time and Paul writing that the Galatians were *returning again to the weak and worthless elements*, obviously, of paganism. Paul never calls the Law that God gave to Israel, *weak or worthless elements*. Also, what pagan Galatians had kept Passover, etc., *before* they came to Christ, and according to Christianity, no good Gentile Christian would.

Cole brings out that the *days* of Gal. 4:10 are seen as “special days,” which are translated as such in the HCSB, NIV and NRSV English Bibles. He writes that pagans had days which were lucky and/or unlucky days, in terms of their pagan horoscopes.

One major problem with the four words referring to Mosaic Law that seems to have eluded most theologians and pastors who are “certain” that the four terms speak of Jewish Sabbaths and Feasts of Israel, etc., is the fact that Paul, in Col. 2:16, literally speaks of the *Sabbath* and *Feasts* (of Israel), etc., but he doesn’t write of one Jewish term (e.g. Sabbath) among the four terms of Galatian 4:10. This glaring omission has gone virtually unnoticed by scholars, but it certainly points to the understanding that Paul is not speaking about the times of Mosaic Law, but of paganism. Breaking down the meaning of the Greek terms also reveals that, even though some can be generically connected to Mosaic Law.

Days

Days in Gal. 4:10 is ἡμέρας (*hay’meras*) and means a regular day, or of time in general, and it can also mean the Last Day, as well as a way of counting the lifespan of a man.¹³ Boice and many others wrongly teach that it means the Sabbath day, but if Paul had meant the biblical Sabbath of God he would have used the Greek term for it, σαββάτον (*Sabbatone*),¹⁴ not a general term for ‘a day.’ Yet, in Col. 2:16 the Apostle to the Gentiles writes *Sabbatone* when speaking of the Sabbath of Mosaic Law.¹⁵ Boice and others read too much of Moses into this Greek word.

Months

Months in Gal. 4:10 is μήνας (*maynas*) and even though it’s used in Isaiah 1:13, etc. (in the Greek Septuagint) for new moons, interestingly enough, the *only* place where *some* Christian scholars think it means *new moons* is Gal. 4:10, and this is heavily contested by a number of Christian theologians.¹⁶ Every other

¹² David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), p. 557.

¹³ ἡμέρα Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, paragraphs 4,634–4,637; “of the natural day...of the civil day...of the last day of the present age...of time in general...the time immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ from heaven, Luke 17:26...Finally, the Hebrews and the Hellenists who imitate them measure the duration and length also of human life by the number of days.”

¹⁴ σαββάτον *sabbaton* *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 8,383; “found in the N.T. only in the historical books” (that is the Gospels and Acts) “except twice in Paul’s Epistles” (Col. 2:16; Heb 4:9), “*sabbath*; i.e.: 1. the seventh day of each week, which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work (Ex. 20:10; 31:13f; Deut. 5:14).”

¹⁵ “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or *sabbaths*,” (Colossians 2:16 NKJV). The Greek word for Sabbaths is σαββάτον (*Sabbatone*).

¹⁶ μήν *main* Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 6,431. The primary meaning is

place in the New Testament where *maynas* is found speaks of either an entire month or a day within a month.¹⁷ For example, Luke writes, “Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived and she hid herself *five months*, saying...” (Luke 1:24 NKJV) and,

“At this time Moses was born and was well pleasing to God, and he was brought up in his father’s house for *three months*.” (Acts 7:20 NKJV)

Of the 11 English translations of the New Testament that I have, every one of them translates *may’nas* in Gal. 4:10 as *months*, not new moons.¹⁸ If Paul had meant the Mosaic new moons he would certainly have used the Greek word: νεομηνία (*neo’may’nia*),¹⁹ which he uses for *months* in Colossians 2:16.²⁰

Interestingly enough, in the pagan religion of Islam the *entire month* of Ramadan is observed. Muslims *fast* during the daylight hours and break it every day at sunset to eat. It’s a strange ‘fast,’ as normally a fast goes for at least 24 hours without food, but this gives us some insight into a possible aspect of Gnosticism in Galatia where they seem to have observed a month/s, perhaps fasting as Muslims do in Ramadan. Of course, Islam wasn’t a religion in Paul’s day, but the rites of pagan religions, and Islam is a pagan religion, which originally worshiped the moon,²¹ have similar concepts and practices, and go back to ancient Babylon, as does the Catholic Lent.

Lent is a Roman Catholic tradition *taken from paganism*, that a number of Protestant Christian churches, in their scriptural and historical ignorance, and anti-Mosaic Law theology, also observe:

“Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks (40 days) later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing *penance, mortifying the flesh..and self-denial*.” Lent “is observed in the Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches. Some Anabaptist and evangelical churches also observe the Lenten *season*...In Lent, many Christians commit to *fasting*, as well as ‘giving up’ certain luxuries in order to identify with Christ in His

month, not new moons; “1. *a month*: Luke 1:24, 26, 36, 56; 4:25; Acts 7:20; 18:11; 19:8; 20:3; 28:11; James 5:17; Rev. 9:5, 10, 15; 11:2; 13:5; 22:2...2. *the time of new moon, new moon* ...Gal. 4:10 (Lightfoot compares Isa. 66:23; the first day of each month, when the new moon appeared was a festival among the Hebrews; cf. Lev. 23:24; Num. 28:11; Ps. 80:4...others refer the passage to 1” (months).

¹⁷ μήν *main* Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (third edition, 2001; Accordance Bible Software), p. 648; “1. *month* Lk 1:36...Acc. of time answering the question: how long?...*for five months* Lk. 1:24; cp. vs. 56; 4:25...Acts 7:20; 18:11; 20:3; Js 5:17; Rev. 9:5, 10; 11:2; 13:5. Lk. 1:26...*for a period of three months*...Ac 19:8; cp. Lk 4:25...*every month* Rv 22:2...*after three months* Ac 28:11...2. *new moon* (festival) Gal 4:10.”

¹⁸ The ASV, ESVS, HCSB, JNT, KJV, NASB, NEB, NET, NIV, NKJV and the NRSV.

¹⁹ νεομηνία *neo’may’nia* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 668-669; “in the contracted form νομηνία Col 2:16...*new moon, first of the month*, oft. celebrated as a festival by Jews and gentiles: Col 2:16...Is. 1:13 νομηνία...the time of the new moon.”

νεομηνία Wesley J. Perschbacher, Editor, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1990), p. 282; “new moon, first of the month (Col. 2:16, GNT, WH & NA...TR).”

νεομηνία William D. Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 327; “new moon, first of the month, Col. 2:16.”

νεομηνία Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 6,705; “according to a rarer uncontracted form...*new moon*...of the Jewish festival of the new moon...Col. 2:16. The Septuagint chiefly for *hodeš* (month) also for *ehād hodeš* (one month) Ex. 40:2; and *hodeš ro’s* (head or first of the month) Num. 10:10; 28:11.”

²⁰ “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a *new moon* or sabbaths” (Colossians 2:16 NKJV). The Greek word for new moon is νεομηνία (*neo’may’nia*).

²¹ See [For The Serious Muslim](#) and [Islam and the Book of Peace](#) as to why Islam is a murderous pagan cult that does not suffer any “infidels.”

40 days of fasting in the” wilderness.²²

Lent and its 40 days sound like a biblical and noble idea, but Scripture speaks nothing of Lent, with its penance, *mortification of the flesh and self-denial*. These are Gnostic practices, alive and well within the Roman Catholic Church and all those Christian churches who unwittingly follow Rome in her idolatry and heresies, for Roman Catholicism gave them to Christianity.

Alexander Hislop writes that Lent was observed centuries before Yeshua was born, and so Lent cannot possibly commemorate Yeshua nor His 40 days of fasting in the wilderness, even if Catholicism has plastered the name of “Jesus” over the pagan god and this pagan practice. Hislop, who wrote the Christian classic, *The Two Babylons*, rhetorically asks and historically answers where Lent came from:

“Whence then, came this observance?²³ The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, ‘in the spring of the year,’ is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan,²⁴ who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent of *forty days* was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans, for thus we read in Humboldt, where he gives account of Mexican observances:”

‘Three days after the vernal’ (spring) ‘equinox...began a solemn fast of forty days in honour of the sun.’²⁵

“Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt, as may be seen on consulting Wilkinson’s *Egyptians*.²⁶ This Egyptian Lent of forty days...was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god.”²⁷

“Among the Pagans, this Lent seems to have been *an indispensable preliminary* to the great annual festival in commemoration of *the death and resurrection* of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing. To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome” (i.e. The Roman Catholic Church) “pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get...Paganism and Christianity...to shake hands.”²⁸

Lent is pure paganism and it has absolutely nothing to do with Jesus, but it has a lot do with His pagan rivals (e.g. Tammuz, Osiris and Adonis, etc.), who were also known by the title of ‘Christ’ and ‘Savior,’ and who also allegedly died for the sins of the world. It was 40 days of weeping for the sacrificial death of Tammuz, with rejoicing, ‘knowing’ that he rose from the dead in victory over death. In the ancient Assyrian kingdom the holy day that he rose from the dead was known as *Ishtar* Sunday, Ishtar being the Assyrian Queen of Heaven (cf. Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19). She allegedly resurrected her dead Savior-Son on *Ishtar* Sunday, which translates into English as *Easter* Sunday. What are Christians doing keeping Lent, and Easter Sunday?

Weeping for Lent lasted for a little more than a *month* over the death of the pagan Christ, and perhaps

²² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lent>. For Yeshua fasting for 40 days see Mt. 4:2; Mk. 1:13; and Lk. 4:2. Yeshua’s fast was not at the time before Passover, but just after He was baptized in water, which would have been in the autumn, not in the spring (see [The Feast of Trumpets](#), p. 6f.).

²³ Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, 2nd American edition (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959; originally published in 1862), p. 104; in *The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop*, which is Avram Yehoshua’s PDF of the book that can be found online at Avram’s website, where it’s p. 81. Hislop overwhelmingly proves that the Roman Catholic Church is the Babylon of the New Testament (Rev. 14:8; 17:5; cf. 18:4). You can read and/or download [The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop](#). It’s a free read (Mt. 10:8).

²⁴ Ibid., note ¶: Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 93.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 105, note *: Humboldt, *Mexican Researches*, v. i. p. 404; p. 81, *The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop*.

²⁶ Ibid., note †: Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 278.

²⁷ Ibid., note ‡: Landseer, *Sabean Reseraches*, p. 112.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 105; p. 81, *The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop*.

fasting on some days? Most likely. Even carnal Israel followed suit. In Ezekiel 8:14, the prophet is shown Jewish women weeping for Tammuz.

This *weeping for Tammuz* happened in many countries, centuries before the Lord Yeshua lived in Israel; the name of the god and goddess changing with each country “to make it their own god and goddess.” For instance, Ishtar is also known as Astarte, Diana and Isis, etc. Lent is one of many pagan things that Christians churches commemorate ‘in the name of Jesus.’²⁹

Paul, addressing the Galatians about their observance of *months*, could very well have been speaking about a pagan Lent ‘for Jesus Christ’ and/or a pagan version of Islam’s Ramadan. Paul’s mention of *months* certainly doesn’t tie-in with the Greek term for Mosaic *new moons*, which is different then *months*. Like *days*, it’s more a general designation for a month.

Seasons

Seasons, the third term in Gal. 4:10, is *καιρός* (*kai’rous*) and is another general designation used for units of time, even though it is also used in the Old Testament to speak of God’s Feasts. Thayer states it’s a measure of time or a fixed unit of time, and also, it is used sometimes in the Septuagint for God’s Feasts.³⁰ Walter Bauer affirms Thayer in the term’s general use and also for some Mosaic Feasts.³¹ It’s very strange, though, that Paul would use a general term, *seasons*, to refer to the Feasts of Israel, when he could have just said, the Feasts of Israel. He speaks of them in Col. 2:16, where the Greek word is *ἑορτή* (*heortē*).³² Why the ambiguity if the Apostle wanted us to know that it was the Feasts of Mosaic Law that he was speaking about?

²⁹ For some articles that address the paganism that flourishes in the Christian Church today, see these one page handouts:

[A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law](#),

[The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#),

[The Two Triangles of the NT](#), and

[Why Sunday?](#), and also these longer articles:

[Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#),

[Hebrews and the Change of the Law](#), [Law 102](#) and

[Romans 14 and the Dietary Laws](#).

³⁰ *καιρός kairos* Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 5,143, 5,145; “the Septuagint for *ἔτι* and *μόλι*” (*times* and *meetings*, respectively; *mo’ed* being used for meeting God at” at the Tabernacle for “His Feasts, as well as ordinary meetings between men). “*a measure of time*; a larger or smaller portion of time; hence, a. universally, *a fixed and definite time*: Rom. 13:11; 2nd Cor. 6:2...up to a certain time, for a season, Luke 4:13...for a certain time only, for a season, Luke 8:13; 1st Cor. 7:5.”

³¹ *καιρός kairos* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 497-498; “a point of time or period of time, *time, period*, freq. with implication of being esp. fit for someth. and without emphasis on precise chronology...a defined period for an event. *definite, fixed time*. Abs. *καιροί festival seasons* (Ex. 23:14, 17; Lev. 23:4)...Gal. 4:10.”

Johannes Louw and Eugene A. Nida, Editors, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 2 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), p. 128; §67.78, §67.145. A “period of time,” and an “era.”

Ibid., Louw, vol. 1, p. 639; §67.78. An “indefinite unit of time (the actual extent of time being determined by the context); ‘time, ‘period of time.’” It denotes “essentially a duration of time, but without specified limits. One may, however, speak of a duration as simply ‘a period of time,’ but this does not imply a unit such as ‘hour,’ ‘year,’ or ‘generation.’”

³² “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a *festival* (i.e. feast of Israel) or a new moon or sabbaths” (Colossians 2:16 NKJV). The Greek word of Feast in Col. 2:16 (Feast of Israel) is *ἑορτή* (*heortē*).

Years

Years is ἐνιαυτούς (*enia'ou'tous*) and Thayer states it means, “a year,³³ a period of one year.” Bauer says the word is used of an annual pilgrimage of the Old Testament, but that the *meaning* of this word, in combination with the previous word for seasons (*kai'rous*) in Gal. 4:10,

“*is not certain*. It could be an allusion to the so-called ‘sabbatical years’ (Lev. 25), but it may also signify *certain days of the year*.”³⁴

Louw and Nida speak of ‘one year,’ meaning,

“the period of a complete year (similar in meaning to ἔτος [*ae'tos*] ‘year,’ §67.167, but with the focus upon duration); ‘one-year period, one year’...‘we will travel to a certain city where we will spend one year,’ James 4:13.”³⁵

Louw also writes of it being, “a unit of time involving a complete cycle of seasons: ‘year....When he was 12 years old,’ Lk. 2:42.”³⁶ Another shade of meaning for *enia'ou'tous* is,

“a unit of time of indefinite length, possibly somewhat shorter than αἰών ‘age’ (§67.143) but of a relatively uncertain reference; ‘age, era, time...to announce the favorable time of the Lord (that is to say, an era in which the Lord bestows his favor) Lk. 4:19.”³⁷

Christian theologians who *insist* that the term for *years* means the Sabbatical year or the Jubilee year have no biblical evidence that the term refers to something Mosaic, of which they can’t even agree on. The Greek term is used of many other things, one of which could be a pagan annual festival. If the Apostle Paul had meant a Mosaic yearly feast such as the Year of Jubilee, which is actually more than a year, or the Sabbatical year, he would have written it as such.

The four Greek words of Gal. 4:10 are generic words for days, months, seasons and years. Together, as a unit, they have no direct tie to Mosaic Law, even though the last three can speak of Jewish things, but it seems more likely that they speak, as Cole and Stern point out, of pagan days and pagan month keeping, etc.

There is an interesting parallel with the Greek terms for days, seasons and years found in the Septuagint for Genesis 1:14, but the order in which it’s written in Genesis is not the order Paul writes it in, which means it doesn’t have anything to do with Gen. 1:14. This, along with the fact that one term is missing (*months*) leads me to think that there is no connection to Galatians 4:10, other than the three Greek words are the same:

“Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day

³³ ἐνιαυτός *enia'ou'tous* Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 3,769; “a year: John 11:49, 51; 18:13; Acts 11:26; 18:11; James 5:17; Rev. 9:15; plural, of the Jewish years of Jubilee, Gal. 4:10...to spend a year, James 4:13...Heb. 9:7...*yearly*, Heb. 9:25; 10:1, 3...in a wider sense, for some fixed and definite period of time: Luke 4:19 (from Is. 61:2).”

³⁴ ἐνιαυτός *enia'ou'tous* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 336-337; “a period of one year, *year* Rev. 9:15...*high priest for that year* Jn. 11:49, 51; 18:13...The supposition that there was a different high priest every year holds good for Asia Minor...and for Syria...but not for Jerusalem...*spend a year* James 4:13...*for a whole year* Acts 11:26...*once a year* Heb. 9:7 (Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:34...*for as long as a year*...of an annual pilgrimage; LXX...a period of time other than a calendar year...God has ordained eight ages; Jos., Ant. 1, 106...consists of 600 years), of the age of salvation brought by the Messiah...Lk 4:19...Is 61:2...a rather long period of time.”

³⁵ Louw, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1, p. 651; §67.168.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, §67.167. “In a number of languages, years are described in terms of repeated seasons. For example, some languages would speak of ‘twelve years’ as being ‘twelve winters’ or ‘twelve summers,’ while in other languages one might have an expression such as ‘twelve rainy seasons’ or ‘twelve returns of the sun.’”

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 648; §67.146.

from the night; and let them be for signs and *seasons*, and for *days* and *years*.” (Gen 1:14)

“You observe *days* and months and *seasons* and *years*.” (Galatians 4:10 NKJV)

The order in Genesis is *seasons, days and years*, while the order in Galatians is *days, (months), seasons and years*. In other words, if Paul was thinking of Gen. 1:14, and wanting to make Gal. 4:10 “Jewish,” without using Greek terms for the Sabbath, etc., he certainly would have written it in the same order found in Genesis One and not included *months*.

The Jews were not the only ancient people who kept days and months, etc. Most every ancient people kept track of their months by the sighting of the new moon (which begins a biblical or pagan month), and they had their own ‘days and seasons,’ etc., just as the USA has its own days (e.g. holidays like President’s Day and Veteran’s Day) and months and seasons (e.g. Xmas *season*).

W. Schmithals states of the four Greek terms in Galatians 4:10 that the Apostle to the Gentiles was,

“*employing a current familiar list which was not widespread in Jewish orthodoxy, but frequently occurs above all in the apocryphal and Gnostic or gnosticizing literature*’ and that it’s ‘*Gnosticism in one of its varieties*.’”³⁸

This understanding of Schmithals (Cole and Stern) shifts the four terms of Gal. 4:10 directly into paganism. The contrast between Gal. 4:10 and the Greek words Paul uses, and Col. 2:16, with its Greek words for the things of Mosaic Law, couldn’t be plainer—the Apostle is not speaking of Mosaic Law in Galatians 4:10, but of pagan days, pagan months, pagan seasons and pagan years.

Christian Presumptions

Even though Paul doesn’t write of Sabbaths in Gal. 4:10, but of *days*, it’s not unusual for Christians, as we see with Boice and Lenski, to *interpret* ‘days’ to mean the 7th day Sabbath of the Jews. We see this same misinterpretation and misapplication in Romans 14:5-6, where Christians insert ‘Sabbath’ where Paul speaks of *day*. The Apostle, though, isn’t referring to the Sabbath day in these two verses:

⁵“One person esteems *one day above another*; another esteems *every day alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the *day*, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the *day*, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; *and he who does not eat*, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.” (Romans 14:5-6 NKJV)

Christians wrongly think that Paul’s use of ‘one *day* above another,’ and ‘he who observes the *day*, observes it to the Lord,’ as the 7th day Sabbath. This gives them justification for not keeping the 7th day Sabbath and being able to have any day as their ‘Sabbath,’ but that’s not what Paul means by ‘day.’ He is settling a theological dispute among the Christians in Rome that involved one group (the meat eaters) eating meats that had been sacrificed to idols, whose ‘leftovers’ they had bought at the market and sold to them, and another group, the ‘veggie-only eaters,’ who would not eat that meat, believing it was defiled by the sacrifice to the idol.³⁹

The veggie-only eaters also had *special days for fasting*, as seen in v. 6 (“He who eats, eats to the Lord,

³⁸ Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 192, from Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, pp. 44, 46; also Bruce, *Galatians*, pp. 205-206.

³⁹ The market was the only place where meat could be bought and all the meat had either been sacrificed to an idol at the idol’s shrine, or had been blessed by a pagan priest, slaughtered and set out in the market place for people to buy. Read [Romans 14 and the Dietary Laws](#) for a fuller explanation of the squabble between the two groups, and who Paul sides with, and what Paul really says about clean and unclean meats, as well as choosing any day one ‘wants to keep as’ their Sabbath.

for he gives God thanks; *and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat*, and gives God thanks”), which they “esteemed” and “observed” above other *days* when they did eat (i.e. they esteemed those days and fasted), while the meat eaters didn’t fast or had days they esteemed (for fasting) above other days. It doesn’t have anything to do with the the negation of the 7th day Sabbath nor with Christians not having to keep the Sabbath if they don’t want to, or of Paul allowing or authorizing Christians to choose any day “as their Sabbath.” *The Sabbath is not even mentioned* in Romans 14 nor anywhere else in Romans, but Christians are quick to interpret *day* as speaking of the Sabbath. That same Christian quickness is seen in the *days* of Galatians 4:10.

When Paul wants to address a Sabbath issue he writes of the Sabbath, as he does in Col. 2:16. The point here is that the Apostle doesn’t write of the Sabbath in Gal. 4:10, and so to automatically interpret *days* to mean the 7th day Sabbath is a very poor assumption, yet Boice writes of the *days* and *months*, etc., that, “*there can be little doubt* that the observances the Galatians were succumbing to...were *Jewish observances*,” and that days, months, seasons and years is a “*listing of the Jewish observances*.”⁴⁰

Paul, though, is speaking of pagan or Gnostic⁴¹ days and months, etc., as we’ve seen. The Greek word for *elements*, and the fact that these Galatian Christians were *returning again* to their *former bondage* (of paganism), attests to this biblical understanding.

The Weak and Worthless Elements

A second major point that presents itself against the four Greek terms of Galatians 4:10 referring to Mosaic Law is that Paul calls them, ‘weak and worthless (beggarly) elements (στοιχεῖα *stokay’ah*). The Greek word for *elements* in v. 9 has two possible meanings and theologians are divided on this. One has three shades of meanings:

1. the basic moral principles of the world or

⁴⁰ Boice, *Galatians*, paragraph 55,193. Also, see p. 2.

⁴¹ “Gnosticism (from Ancient Greek: γνωστικός *gnostikos*, ‘having knowledge,’ from γνώσις *gnōsis*, knowledge) is a *modern name* for a variety of ancient religious ideas and systems...these systems induced that the material world is created by an emanation of the highest God, trapping the Divine spark within the human body. This Divine spark could be liberated by gnosis of this Divine spark...*Gnosis* refers to knowledge based on personal experience or perception. In a religious context, *gnosis* is mystical or esoteric knowledge based on direct participation with the divine. In most Gnostic systems the sufficient cause of salvation is this ‘knowledge of (‘acquaintance with’) the divine...Gnostics seem to have originated in Alexandria, Egypt and *coexisted* with the early Christians until the 4th Century AD. Because there was as yet no fixed church authority, syncretism with pre-existing belief systems, as well as new religions, was often embraced...Within early Christianity, the teachings of Paul and John may have been a starting point for Gnostic ideas, with a growing emphasis on the opposition between flesh and spirit.” From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>.

Gnosticism that holds “that this world” (and one’s flesh) “is essentially a prison for the spirit. In Gnostic forms of Christianity, for example, the creator god of the Bible is interpreted as an evil demiurge, who built the world to trap us; the real God is on a higher plane entirely, and Christ is our connection to him, providing the possibility of reuniting the trapped spark of spirit within us with its divine source.” From <https://starweaverwitch.wordpress.com/2008/03/31/gnostics-and-pagans/>.

On the other hand, paganism is more ancient than Gnosticism. Paganism is the licentious worship of gods and goddesses, with no sexual restraints. Saturnalia was a Roman feast where naked men and woman indulged in sex and food, ‘celebrating life.’ Inherent in pagan idolatry is the belief that sexual intercourse with the priests and/or priestesses (prostitutes) at the pagan shrine/temple was union with the god or goddess.

“Paganism, gnosticism and the new age movement are for the most part temptations with the same enticement the devil...gave to our first parents that if they took part of the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and rebelled against God and His word they would not die, but they would become as gods knowing good and evil, and that this fruit was to be desired to make one *wise*.” From <http://www.spiritandtruthministries.org/Spirit%20and%20Truth%20Ministries/Church%20Bible%20Prophecy/Paganism.html>.

2. the religious practices, or
3. the very elements that make up the Universe.

The other meaning speaks of demonic spirits that pagans thought were gods who controlled and ordered their lives through how the planets and stars lined up (e.g. astrology and the horoscope). Thayer states it's,

“the elements from which all things have come, the material causes of the *universe...the heavenly bodies*...because in them the *elements of man's life and destiny* were supposed to reside...Hence, some interpreters...understand Paul's phrase *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20, of the *heavenly bodies*, because *times and seasons*, and so sacred seasons, were regulated by the course of the sun and moon.”⁴²

The use of the sun, the stars, the planets and the moon to worship and/or to determine man's destiny (astrology) is strictly prohibited by Mosaic Law (Dt. 4:19), but was common for all pagans, as it is even today among non-Christians and Christians alike.

Barker states that the Greek term means,

““things placed side by side in a row” (as the ABCs) and then came to mean *fundamental principles or basic elements of various kinds*. The context here suggests that it refers to the *elemental forms of religion*, whether those of the Jews (under the Law, v. 5) or those of the *Gentiles (under their old religious bondage, v. 8) of the world*. In the sense that these principles do not come from the “new creation” (6:15).”⁴³

F. F. Bruce tries to link the Greek word *elements* to Mosaic Law by stating that the same (demonic) spirits who had controlled the Gentiles before as pagans in their paganism, would now control them through Mosaic Law. In Gal. 4:3 Paul first uses the term for *elements*, but there it may very well be speaking of our (Jewish and Gentile) carnal nature being part of the ‘worthless elements’ of the world, not Mosaic Law. As Ronald Fung adroitly asks, if *elements*,

“denotes elemental spirits...it has to be explained how submitting to the regulations of the Jewish law is tantamount to being enslaved to these spirits.”⁴⁴

This is an excellent point. It would appear that Bruce is saying that God enslaved His own people Israel to demonic spirits by giving them His laws and rules for living (i.e. Mosaic Law). Bruce doesn't address that, but equating Mosaic Law with demonic spirits that enslave Jews is tantamount to making God, who freed Israel from Egyptian slavery, quite a monster—freeing them from Egyptian slavery only to enslave them to something far worse—His laws, and using demonic spirits to do it! Equating Mosaic Law to demonic spirits is hardly worthy of consideration.

This understanding, of paganism and its effects upon its former adherents, was not confined to only the Galatians. It's also seen in Paul's Letter to the Colossians when the Apostle writes of Gnosticism's former hold upon them, to which some were *turning back to* along with their belief in Jesus:

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through *philosophy and empty deceit*, according to the *tradition of men*, according to the *basic principles* (i.e. basic elements or spirits; στοιχεῖα *stoikay'ah*) of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Colossians 2:8 NKJV)

“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the *basic principles* (i.e. basic elements of religion or spirits; στοιχεῖα *stoikay'ah*) of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—” (Colossians 2:20 NKJV)

In Col. 2:8 Paul aligns *elements* with *philosophy and empty deceit*, as well as *the tradition of men*, which

⁴² Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, para. 8,701.

⁴³ Barker, *The NIV Study Bible*, para. 23,569.

⁴⁴ Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 190.

is certainly not something Paul ever plainly says about Mosaic Law, for it's not a tradition of man, but the Word of God. Paul is speaking about Gnosticism in the Colossian passages. Consequently, it's clear that Paul wasn't writing of Mosaic Law in Galatians when he uses the same word for *elements*, just a verse before speaking of days and months, etc. (v. 9), and so it must be pagan *days*, etc.⁴⁵

Also, there is no place in Scripture where Paul, or anyone else, aligns Mosaic Law with *weak and worthless elements*. On the contrary, the Apostle Paul, in his greatest theological letter, written one year or four years *after* Galatians, speaks of Mosaic Law being holy and spiritual:

“Therefore, *the Law is holy*, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good (i.e. the Law), so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*” (Romans 7:12-14; circa 54 AD)

Galatians is a “rough draft” of Romans concerning the Law and circumcision used for justification, but in Romans Paul balances his theology against adding the Law for salvation, symbolized in physical, covenantal circumcision, with his view on the Law as God's holy guideline, teaching the standard for sin and Christian lifestyle (cf. Rom. 3:20, 31).⁴⁶ If Paul calls Mosaic Law holy and spiritual in Romans he's obviously not calling it weak and worthless in Galatians.⁴⁷

Theologian Moisés Silva concurs and speaks of Gal. 4:8-11 as reminding “the Galatians of their life in *paganism*,” and says they “were going *back* to slavery.”⁴⁸ Schmithals saw the Galatian Christians as keeping a pagan calendar⁴⁹ (v. 10), and this, too would point to the weak and beggarly elements of their pagan religious times and the demonic forces behind their calendar that the Galatians were wanting *to be enslaved to again*.

Turning Again

The third major problem with Galatians 4:9-10 speaking of the *days* and *elemental* things of Mosaic Law is that Paul the Apostle writes of the Galatians *returning* (v. 9, twice), which obviously speaks of something they had previously walked in. One reference to *returning* would have been enough for us to realize that these former pagan Gentiles could not be *returning* to Mosaic Law because they had never observed it as pagans, but astonishingly enough, Paul speaks of them returning to their former enslavement as pagans twice, and that, in the same verse (v. 9). It's truly astonishing because most Christian theologians and pastors do not pick up on it. Paul writes of them; “that you *turn again* to the weak and worthless elements, to which you desire *again* to be enslaved?”

The Greek words for “*turn again*” to the weak and worthless elements to which you desire “*again*” to be enslaved (v. 9) are “ἐπιστρέφετε πάλιν” (*epis'tray'faytay palin*) and “πάλιν ἄνωθεν” (*palin ah'nothen*). Breaking them down it's easy to see that what the Galatians were *returning* to something they had previ-

⁴⁵ Colossians was written about 62 AD or about 10 years after Galatians.

⁴⁶ “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin*” (Romans 3:20 NKJV). A more accurate translation would have, “for by the Law is the *full knowledge* of sin.” The Greek word for knowledge is ἐπίγνωσις *epignosis*: “full knowledge,” not just ‘knowledge.’ Without Mosaic Law Christians are severely handicapped in not knowing God's definition of sin, which is found in Mosaic Law, as interpreted by Yeshua. See [Mosaic Law and the Ten](#), which reveals that when the term ‘law’ is used in the New Testament (and the Old), it overwhelmingly means Mosaic Law, and not just “the Ten.”

⁴⁷ See [Take the Quiz! Five Quick Questions about the New Testament](#).

⁴⁸ Moisés Silva, D. A Carson. et. al., editors, *Galatians*, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994; Accordance Bible Software), p. 1,215.

⁴⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 205-206.

ously walked in—the pagan days, months, seasons and years they had grown up with. Numbers 1 and 2 form the English phrase in the NKJV, *turn again*, while number 3 also translates as *again*:

1. **turn** (*epis'tray'faytay*) means, “to return to a point where one has been, turn around, go back”⁵⁰ and “to return, turn back.”⁵¹
2. **again** (*palin*) means, “to return to a position or state, back...to repetition in the same (or similar) manner, again,”⁵² and “it denotes *renewal or repetition of the action*: Matt. 4:8; 20:5; 21:36.”⁵³
3. **again** (*palin ah'nothen*)⁵⁴ emphasizes *again* and means, “repetition, again,”⁵⁵ and “over again, indicating repetition.”⁵⁶

The Greek words reveal that the Galatians were returning to their former pagan days and ways as Christians. Paul is not coming against them for keeping the days and ways of Mosaic Law, but for their embracing *again*, the days and months, etc., of paganism, which had enslaved them to the elemental things of Gnosticism/paganism (its principles and calendars and/or its demons, etc.).

Three Strikes and You're Out!

It was quite a congregation in Galatia. On the one hand Paul comes against the (most likely Gnostic) Jewish Christians, rightly called Judaizers, for wanting the Galatians to be circumcised and have faith in Jesus in order to be saved. This heresy is the theme of Galatians chapters 2–5 and why we know they were Jews (because Gentiles wouldn't espouse circumcision).

On the other hand, these same folks, or Gentile Galatian Christians, wanted to keep Gnostic days and months, etc. If it was the same group for the two heresies, they were rogue Jews who 'believed' in Jesus, but who had previously learned Gnosticism and added it to their repertoire. They were different than the Pharisaic Judaizers at the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15:1, 5 in that those Pharisees didn't have any Gnostic or pagan leanings, but they wanted the Gentiles circumcised and keeping Torah, along with faith in Yeshua, to be saved.

This understanding of Gnosticism/paganism comes out in Paul's mentioning of *days* and *months*, etc., which are the four specific points of the *weak and beggarly elements* that the Galatians had previously observed as pagans.

On the other hand, the Christians that Paul came against in Colosse were not Jews, but Gentile Christians who were steeped in Gnosticism before they had recently come to Christ, and were now trying to influence the other Christians in Colosse that they needed these Gnostic ways in order to reach God more effectively and also be saved. In other words, Jesus wasn't enough, and hence why Paul writes that 'in Yeshua' was the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 1:13-19f.), and hence, they didn't need to go through their Gnostic intermediary “angels” to be heard by God (cf. Col. 2:18). There is nothing in Colossians to suggest the Gnostic Christians were Jews.

It was specifically in relation to Gentile Gnostic condemnation of *how* the Colossian Christians were already keeping Mosaic Law that Paul wrote, telling the Colossians not to let anyone *judge* them *in their*

⁵⁰ ἐπιστρέφω *epitrefo* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 382.

⁵¹ ἐπιστρέφω *epitrefo* Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, para. 4,170.

⁵² πάλιν *palin* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 752.

⁵³ πάλιν *palin* Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, para. 7,187.

⁵⁴ The Textus Receptus does not have *ah'nothen*, but the Nestle-Aland text does. Not having *ah'nothen* in the TR does not change the meaning of 'again' as the KJV has, 'whereunto ye desire *again (palin)* to be in bondage?'

⁵⁵ ἄνωθεν *anohen* Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ ἄνωθεν, *anohen* Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, para. 1,424.

observance of Mosaic Law (foods to eat or not eat, and how to keep Sabbath, etc.). Having admonished them he goes on, in the very next verse, Col. 2:17, to tell them that those things of Mosaic Law are actually divine picture-shadows of the Messiah who is to return, making these Old Testament shadows wonderful biblical teachings. It also reveals that the Church's stance against Mosaic Law is not biblical. On the contrary, Paul upholds the Sabbath and New Moons, etc., of Mosaic Law while coming against those new Christians who would impose their Gnostic perceptives on them. Contrary to Christianity, Paul is not rebuking the Galatians for keeping the Sabbath and New Moons of Mosaic Law, etc., but letting them know that no one was to judge them in how they kept it.

It's because Paul is dealing with these 'second generation' Judaizers in Gal. 2-5, that most theologians assume that the four terms of Gal. 4:10 speak about the Sabbaths, etc., of Mosaic Law. This position, though, has three strikes against:

1. What is absent from Paul's four Greek terms in Gal. 4:10 are any actual names from Mosaic Law, like Sabbath, yet in Colossians 2:16 he specifically uses Mosaic Law terms for "festival, new moon and Sabbaths." This is a powerful point against those who insist that the four terms of Gal. 4:10 must be referring to the times of Mosaic Law.
2. The phrase, 'weak and worthless elements' (Gal. 4:9) is never used by Paul, nor any other person in Scripture, in referring to Mosaic Law, but as Col. 2:8, 20 reveals, to Gnosticism.
3. The mention of the Galatians *returning* to their enslavement (Gal. 4:9), which Paul speaks of twice in the same verse, can only point to pagan days and months, etc., not to Mosaic Law because the Galatian Gentiles never walked in Mosaic Law as pagans, so how could they be returning to it?
 - A. Also as important is that Paul, as well as all the other Apostles and Jewish and Gentile Christians, kept the 7th day Sabbath and the Feasts of Israel. It wasn't until the Roman Church changed it in 120 AD that *illicit SEX* entered into the Body, but for the first 90 years *after* the Resurrection all Christians kept Sabbath, Passover and didn't eat ham. The Roman Catholic Church threw out Mosaic Law and brought in *illicit SEX* and anti-Mosaic Law theology. Therefore, Paul cannot be speaking of the Galatian Gentile Christians *returning* to the things of Mosaic Law.

Ann Jervis, author of the commentary on Galatians for the New International Biblical Commentary, sees this and states that the Galatians were returning to their former pagan days. She writes:

"it is *difficult* to fit Jewish cultic practices neatly into Paul's description of his readers' practice of observing special times...Honoring of seasons and cycles of the year *was part of Celtic religion*" (of which some think had come to Galatia), "Given that Paul is saying both that the Galatians are *returning* to serve the "basic principles" ("elements") and that they are observing *special times*, the practice he describes in this verse *is likely that of a return to former pagan religious customs.*"⁵⁷

As it is in Islam today, there are feasts and "holy days" and "holy months," which they keep, but obviously they are not of Mosaic Law, so it was in Galatia, with a possible 'Lent' that Paul was coming against.

Despite Church teaching against Mosaic Law, and wrongly using some of Paul's phrases to justify their heretical position, the Apostle to the Gentiles kept the Feasts of Israel⁵⁸ and all Mosaic Law that applied to

⁵⁷ L. Ann Jervis, *New International Biblical Commentary: Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), p. 115. See A. M. Draak, 'The Religion of the Celts,' in *Historia Religionum*; ed. C. J. Bleeker and G. Widengren; vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), pp. 629-646, esp. p. 644. Jervis is Full Professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, Canada. She's also written, *Paul the Theologian*, and *The Purpose of Romans: The Gospel in Paul*, as well as many other articles on the Apostle.

⁵⁸ See 1st Cor. 5:6-8, where the Apostle encourages the Corinthians to keep Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and also, [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#) and [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#), [A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law](#), [Why Sunday?](#) and [Law 102](#) to understand that for the first 90 years *after* the resurrection, all Christians walked out their faith in Jesus through all the rules of Moses

him⁵⁹ all his life, just as His Master Yeshua had.⁶⁰ This means that Paul kept the Law's Sabbath, New Moons and Feasts, and that he taught his Gentile Christians to keep them as well, instructing them to imitate him as he imitated the Messiah (1st Cor. 4:16-17; 5:6-8; 7:19; 11:1). Paul knew the divine value of Mosaic Law for himself and all Christians as God's holy Way to walk out their faith in Messiah Yeshua. This is not legalism, but rightly obeying God who gave Mosaic Law to Israel, for it is God's holy Standard for what is right and wrong.

Mosaic Law was amplified Yeshua, He didn't do away with it (Mt. 5:17-19), and so Paul *cannot* be coming against the Sabbath, Feasts and New Moons of Mosaic Law in Gal. 4:10. For example, Yeshua taught us to forgive and love our *enemy*, which is infinitely harder than murdering him. Yeshua taught that if we

that applied to them. Paul's coming to believe in Yeshua, the *Jewish* Messiah, in no way cancelled his racial identity as a Jew nor did he ever stop observing all the laws of Moses that applied to him. In Acts 18:18 Paul takes a Nazarite Vow (the cutting off of his hair speaks of it; Num. 6:18-19). The Nazarite Vow entails at least three animals being sacrificed (Num. 6:14). Luke writes that Paul desired to keep 'the coming (*Mosaic*) feast in Jerusalem' (Acts 18:21). In Acts 21:20-24 Paul takes his *second* Nazarite Vow, and James expressly says it was *to show everyone that he kept Mosaic Law* (v. 24; see also Acts 22:12; 23:1-6, where Paul backs down from speaking harshly against the Jewish High Priest, *citing* Mosaic Law; Ex. 22:8), when he could have spoken of Yeshua "as the true High Priest of Israel;" 24:10-18. See also Acts 25:8; 26:6-8, 18, 20-23; 28:17-20, where Paul speaks about having done nothing against Mosaic Law *nor* that it had been invalidated by Yeshua's death).

In Rom. 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14, 16, 22 Paul declares that Mosaic Law is *established* by faith in Christ and says that the Law is holy and spiritual, and in Rom. 3:20 Paul teaches that Mosaic Law reveals the fullness of what sin is, the Greek word for knowledge being *epignosis*: "Therefore, by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, *for by the law is the full knowledge of sin*" (Romans 3:20).

In 1st Cor. 5:6-8 Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to keep Passover, and in 7:17-19 he speaks of Mosaic Law as being what *truly matters*. In 2nd Cor. 12:16-18 he speaks of Titus, a Gentile Christian, walking in the same steps as he (i.e. Mosaic Law). There are a number of places in First Corinthians where Paul uses Mosaic Law to establish his point. This would have been meaningless if Mosaic Law had been done away with because the Corinthians would not have known what Paul was talking about:

1. Paul encourages the Corinthians to keep 'the Feast' (1st Cor. 5:6-8). This can only be Passover—The Feast of Unleavened Bread as he's just spoken to the Corinthians to become unleavened bread, 'as they were meant to be' (v. 7; see also Ex. 12:8-20; Lev. 23:6).
2. He sums up his ability to receive funds from the Corinthians by citing the Law (1st. Cor. 9:8-9f., don't muzzle the ox; Dt. 25:4).
3. He tells them that women should not speak in the assembly, again citing the Law (1st Cor. 14:34-35).
4. In 1st Cor. 16:8 Paul speaks of staying at Ephesus until Pentecost, which is from the Greek word for the Mosaic Law's holy day of *Shavu'ot* (called the Feast of Weeks in English; Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15-22; Num. 28:26; Dt. 16:9-10, 16). Why would Paul 'note time' to *Gentiles* by an 'outdated' Jewish feast that he himself allegedly did away with, unless he still kept Mosaic Law and taught it to his Gentile Christians? (cf. 1st Cor. 4:14-17; 11:1; Phil. 4:9; 1st Thess. 1:6-7; 2nd Thess. 3:7, 9).
5. Finally, Paul speaks of the Corinthians imitating him as he followed the Messiah (1st Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1) and that what truly mattered was keeping the Commandments of God (1st Cor. 7:19). As Yeshua is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8), Paul's imitation of the Messiah must mean that he kept, and taught to his Gentile Christians, Mosaic Law's 7th day Sabbath, Feasts of Israel, and the dietary laws, etc.

⁵⁹ For example, Paul took two Nazarite Vows as a Christian; Acts 18:18; 21:20-24f. With its animal sacrifice it "doesn't get any more Mosaic Law" then that. Paul expressly took the second Vow to declare to everyone, including us today, *that he kept Mosaic Law*; Acts 21:24. See the chapter, *Acts 21:25—Observe No Such Thing!*, p. 152ff., in [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#) for why Paul took the Nazarite Vow with its Mosaic animal sacrifices, 25 years *after* the resurrection in 55 AD. There is no greater thing the Apostle to the Gentiles could have done to show us that he still kept, and taught his Gentiles, Mosaic Law.

⁶⁰ If Jesus had broken the Sabbath or had taught others to eat unclean animals He would have been a sinner because it was Mosaic Law that judged Him sinless. Therefore, we know that He kept all the laws of Moses that applied to Him, and He wants us to do the same. See [Law 102](#) to understand why Jesus saying it doesn't matter what a man eats, doesn't mean He is allowing the eating of unclean meats (e.g. Mt. 15:1f.), and also, [From Sabbath to Sunday](#), p. 21f., to realize that John isn't saying that Jesus broke the Sabbath (Jn. 5:18), but that according to the Pharisees He broke the Sabbath.

had lust in our heart for a married woman we had already committed adultery with her and sinned against her husband. Yeshua taught us the *essence* of the Mosaic commandments and *how* to love our neighbor as ourself. “This was always there in the Law” (e.g. Ex. 23:5, where it speaks of helping our enemy if his donkey has fallen down under its load, and not turning away from it like we didn’t see it), but loving our enemy needed Yeshua to bring it out. God didn’t give these understandings on Mosaic Law to ancient Israel at Mt. Sinai because Israel was carnal and without Messiah’s blood of transformation and the Holy Spirit within, but now, having both, Christians are called to a higher plane of existence, for Messiah’s Kingdom is not of the ways of this world (John 18:36). The keeping of any good law, of say, the USA, is not legalism, but obedience to the law. All God’s laws are for our blessing and protection, our wisdom and our understanding, of Him and ourselves, and how to live out our faith in His Son.⁶¹

The presupposition that Christian theologians come to view any ‘Law passage’ in the New Testament, that it cannot be upholding the validity of keeping the Law, is because they think that Paul gave the Church the “No Law Gospel.” This is heretical and skews their thinking concerning when Paul writes about the Law in general, and in this particular case, when they think he’s writing about the Law’s Sabbaths, etc., in Galatians 4:10.

Romans 14:5-6 revealed the error in Christian thinking that the Sabbath can be inserted where Paul speaks of a *day*. The context revealed it was a *day* the veggie-only eaters set aside or esteemed for fasting (most likely Tuesdays and Thursdays, as the Pharisees were doing). It had nothing to do with God’s 7th day Sabbath and neither does Paul’s use of *days* in Gal. 4:10.

The reason why James issued his four rules for Gentile Christians concerned their salvation (Acts 15:20). The four rules acted as a divine filter to see if Gentile faith in Yeshua was genuine. The four rules restricted the Gentile Christians from worshipping at the temple shrines of Diana and Zeus, etc., because Yeshua would not tolerate being worshiped *as one among many gods and goddesses*.

Most of the Gentiles coming to the Jewish Messiah had many gods and goddesses, and *adding Jesus* to their pantheon would not have seemed wrong to them.⁶² The four rules have nothing to do with table fellowship, as the Church teaches, but with gross idolatry. James knew that many Gentiles would worship Yeshua alongside their other gods, and this reveals the Gentile mindset that Paul was dealing with in Galatia and Colosse. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* describes the pagan mindset of the Gentile *believer*, saying they,

“would gladly have accepted Christ along with Mithra and Isis and Serapis...*The same person* might be initiated into the *mysteries* of half a dozen pagan divinities and also be a priest of two or more gods. Some had not the slightest objection to worshipping Christ along with Mithra, Isis and Adonis.”⁶³

Mosaic Law is God’s wisdom revealing the character and personality of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. Prov. 8:1f.), and how He wants Israel to live in this world. It’s not what Paul is coming against in Colossians Two or Galatians 4:8-11—Gnosticism is the problem.

The lesson that Paul is teaching the Galatians, Colossians and Romans is that it’s not acceptable to worship the Messiah of Israel through Gnostic and pagan days and ways. How much greater would the Apostle’s rebuke to the Church be today upon his realizing that it has taken those same pagan days and perverse ways and “baptized them in the Name of Jesus”? These pagan traditions that overturn God’s

⁶¹ See Ex. 15:26; Dt. 4:6-8; Psalm 111:10.

⁶² See [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#) for what the four rules spoke of and how they acted as a divine filter against sacrificial-sexual idolatry for Gentile Christians. They are not rules on ‘table fellowship,’ but rules pertaining to Gentile salvation.

⁶³ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, general editor; Everett F. Harrison, Roland K. Harrison and William Sanford LaSor, associate editors, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Four (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), p. 214.

Word and His will for us are aptly named *illicit SEX* because these pagan traditions are *forbidden* by God, and hence, *illicit*. Sunday, Easter and Xmas, are not only all pagan days honoring pagan gods and goddesses, they also prevent Christians from observing God's holy Days and Ways. There is no biblical justification for *illicit SEX*.

Christianity is the only religion in the world that does not emulate its Founder, but God is calling Christians to correct that.

When we read Mosaic Law, whatever it is, Feasts, Sabbaths, New Moons, dietary laws, and the Tabernacle of Moses, etc., we see God's divine shadow-pictures revealing *who* our God is and His wisdom for us. Mosaic Law also pictures *things to come...the Messiah and our salvation*, etc. We don't literally see Yeshua, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of the Father's Person (Hebrews 1:3), but through Mosaic Law we can better know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, etc., because Mosaic Law reveals them to us.⁶⁴ Just as our words reveal who we are, so too the words of God reveal who He is, and just as an artist is seen and known by his pictures, so too God in His divine picture-shadows. They are precious insights to us.

Appendix

Colossians 2:16-17

Let no one judge you...regarding...Sabbaths

The Apostle to the Galatian Christians says in Gal. 4:8, *when you did not know God*, which speaks of the Gentile Christians, not any Jewish Christians who might have been in the congregation because the Jews knew the one true God from the time of Father Abraham. The Gentiles came to know God the Father through Yeshua. This understanding also applies to the phrase, *you served those which by nature are not gods*, meaning that Paul is addressing Gentiles who only recently came to know the one true God; the God of Israel. Jews had long ago (5th century BC in Babylon) had stopped worshipping idols, and so again, this would not apply to any Jews in the congregation. This also reveals that what Paul says about *days and months*, etc., in Gal. 4:10, has to do with Gentile pagan 'days and ways,' not the divine Law of the Jews.⁶⁵ There were many different pagan religions in Paul's day, as there are in our day, each with their own set of rules, days and ways.

In Paul's letter to the Colossians (ca. 60 AD), written about seven years or more *after* he wrote about 'the weak and beggarly elements' in Galatians (written ca. 52 AD), the Apostle literally writes of Sabbaths, New Moons and Feasts of Israel, so it's clear he's referring to the days and ways of Mosaic Law:

¹⁶“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, ¹⁷which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:16-17 NKJV)

Note well that Paul calls those Mosaic Law days, ways and times a shadow of Christ, not weak and beggarly elements. If one saw a shadow of a tree on a wall he wouldn't have to see the actual tree in order for him to know it's a tree, and the same holds true with not being able to actually see Yeshua. The Feasts, etc., form various shadows of our Lord to describe and explain who He is and what He has done and what

⁶⁴ Also, many aspects of our God and what He has done for us are found in Mosaic Law. For example, the New Jerusalem is seen in shadow-picture form in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle of Moses, for both are cubes; Ex. 26:15-29; Rev. 21:1-2, 16; cf. 1st Kings 6:20 for Solomon's Holy of Holies, which is also a perfect cube.

⁶⁵ For example, Dt. 4:5-8; Psalm 119:30, 43, 142, 151, 160; Romans 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14.

He will do for us. Without these divine shadows we would be at a tremendous loss to fully understand both His character, His glory and what He has done for us. For instance, the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread entails the prohibition of eating leavened bread and its total riddance from one's home, along with the eating, every day, of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:4f.). Yeast is a symbol of sin (1st Cor. 5:6-8), and so God wants us to realize that He freed us from the Kingdom of Darkness, not to do our own thing, but to walk with Him in holiness or sinlessness. The unleavened bread is a perfect picture of the crucified Christ, and the eating of it speaks of eating of His flesh that we might overcome sin and be holy as He is.⁶⁶

Many Christians wrongly use v. 16 to say they can eat whatever they want, and that no one should judge them. All they have to do is bless the food (misapplying 1st Tim. 4:4-5).⁶⁷ Also, they don't think they have to keep the Sabbaths of Mosaic Law and its New Moons, etc. Aside from what I've written above the shadows, two more things speak against their understanding:

1. Paul says not to let anyone *judge them* about these things, which means that the Colossian Christians weren't to allow others (their new Gnostic Christian friends, no doubt) to judge them, *to condemn them* for not eating the way the Gnostics directed them or not keeping the Sabbath the way the Gnostics wanted them to.
 - a. Biblically, the Colossians could eat whatever they wanted as long as it fell within the guidelines of God's Word (e.g. Lev. 11). Mosaic Law speaks of unclean and abominable animals that one must not eat, and so it's reasonable to think that their new Gnostic Christian friends were saying they needed to fast in order to attain salvation or a greater understanding and knowledge of God.
 - b. Gnosticism, in a religious environment, means knowledge of God and it came to mean secret knowledge of God for eternal life. It was obtained in different ways, and fasting was one of those ways. The theme of Colossians Two has Paul speaking against Gnosticism and its ascetic ways (fasting and pummeling of the body so the spirit 'could be set free;' Col. 2:20f.), which comes immediately after not letting anyone judge them in v. 16. This is preceded by the angelic (i.e. demonic) intermediaries of Gnosticism whom they contacted in order to help them 'know' and get to God (Col. 1:15ff.). Paul is saying that no Gnostic was to condemn the Colossians as to **how** they kept Sabbath, New Moons and Feasts; not **if** they kept them.
 - c. The Church teaches that Sunday replaced the Sabbath at the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that Mosaic Law and the Feasts of Israel, etc., are not for Christians. Paul wrote Colossians (60 AD) about 30 years *after* the resurrection, and the Apostle writes of Sabbaths, New Moons and Feasts of Israel. Shouldn't he have spoken of not letting anyone judge them about their weekly Sunday or yearly Easter observance? It should be obvious that the Sabbath was still being kept by these Christians, and Sunday and Easter hadn't yet entered Christianity. The Book of Acts and Church history bear out that the Sabbath and the Feasts of Israel were kept during the lifetime of all the Apostles, including and especially Paul.⁶⁸
2. In Col. 2:17 Paul says that these things of Mosaic Law (foods, Sabbaths and New Moons, etc.) "are a **shadow of things to come**." We would have expected Paul to say that those things were useless and no longer necessary, if Christianity is right about Paul being the Apostle who told Christians they didn't have to keep Mosaic Law, but he speaks of those Jewish things revealing the Messiah Himself. In other words, for Paul to speak of them in 60 AD, instead of Sunday and Easter it's obvious that the Apostle still considered them valid, and not only valid, but informative in revealing Yeshua, His character

⁶⁶ See [Passover and Jesus](#), [Passover](#), and [The Feast of Unleavened Bread](#).

⁶⁷ The two qualifications for eating food are prayer *and* the Word of God, not just prayer. The Word of God for Paul certainly included Mosaic Law, as is evident from 2nd Tim. 3:10-17. Therefore, pig and shrimp, etc., are not food that Christians can pray over and eat because the Word of God prohibits them (Lev. 11:1f.).

⁶⁸ See [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#) and [A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law](#), [Sabbath Denigration](#) and [Sunday—The Catholic Sabbath](#).

and the salvation that He gives us, and how He wants us to walk out our faith in Him.

- a. Many Christians say they don't need 'the shadow' because they have the Real Thing, but they don't realize that the Real Thing cannot be seen and fully known, and won't be seen and fully known until Judgment Day, in the future. That's another reason *why* God has given us Mosaic Law; it helps us to know His Son better, whom we do not see.⁶⁹ In other words, Mosaic Law (the shadow) pictures the Messiah *who is to come* in various ways. The Apostle is saying that we can know more of who Yeshua is, which is *true knowledge* of Him through God's ordained and holy Mosaic Law (cf. Rom. 7:12, 14), which is Paul's retort to the Gnostic Colossians who sought knowledge of God. The Apostle John writes:
- b. "Beloved, *now* we are Sons of God, *and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be*, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1st John 3:2; cf. 1st Peter 1:8. Seeing Yeshua as He is means that we will be like Him; one with Him; His Bride. It was always in the Father's heart to make us like His Son.)⁷⁰

Mosaic Law has a lot of meaning for Paul. That's because he knew the various things of Mosaic Law picturing the Messiah, whom no one can see now, especially in His glory.⁷¹

The Colossian Christians had some new believers who had a lot of Gnostic baggage. This is apparent as Paul uses all of chapter two to speak against Gnosticism. He tells the Colossians that Yeshua is the Head of the Body, and that *in Him* is the *fullness* of the Godhead bodily, meaning that they didn't have to go through a myriad of (Gnostic) intermediary angel/guardian/demons to get to God (i.e. Satan) and be enlightened (come into cosmic consciousness, which today, ironically, is called Christ consciousness). Yeshua was all they needed:

²"that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the *full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God*, both of the Father and of Christ, ³in whom are hidden *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. ⁴Now this I say *lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words*." (Colossians 2:2-4 NKJV)

⁷"rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. ⁸*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men*, according to the *basic principles of the world*, and not according to Christ. ⁹*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2:7-10 NKJV)

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—²¹"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," ²²which all concern things which perish with the using—*according to the commandments and doctrines of men?* ²³These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in *self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body*, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." (Col. 2:20-23 NKJV)

Paul specifically writes against Gnosticism, saying that in Yeshua the Colossians have,

1. *the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God* (v. 2). Gnosticism thrives on the 'secrets' and *mystery* of God, and,

⁶⁹ For some things of Mosaic Law that reveal the Lord in wonderful ways, see [The Sabbath and Yeshua](#), [Passover and Jesus](#) and [The Feast of Trumpets](#).

⁷⁰ See [Salvation—The Promise!](#) for what the end goal of salvation entails.

⁷¹ For an insightful teaching on the glory of the Lord as seen in the Tabernacle of Moses, go to [BOOKS AND CDS](#) and check out The Tabernacle of Moses—A Picture of Heaven.

2. that *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* of God are *hidden* in the Messiah (v. 3). Gnosticism teaches that only its ways will gain a person the wisdom and knowledge of God, and,
3. that *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* dwells in Yeshua (v. 9). The Gnostics said that the only way to attain that fullness of God was to go through their ‘angelic’ intermediaries, and,
4. that in Yeshua the Colossian Christians are *complete* (v. 10), meaning that there’s no need for the Gnostic mediatorial ‘angels.’

Gnosticism seeks after knowledge and wisdom of God, and Paul is telling the Colossians that they don’t have to seek those things through the false way of Gnosticism, which is the demonic kingdom that competes against God’s Kingdom. Paul warns them *not to be deceived* by the false ways of Gnosticism. Paul is certainly not speaking about Mosaic Law because he says that,

1. the Colossian Christians shouldn’t be *deceived with persuasive words* (v. 4), and
2. to *beware lest anyone cheat them through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men*, according to the *basic principles of the world*, and not according to Christ (v. 8), and
3. that if they had *died with Christ from the basic principles of the world...according to the commandments and doctrines of men* (vv. 20, 22) and,
4. that these *things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh* (v. 23).

The phrases in these five passages of Colossians Two speak of Gnosticism, and they are conceptual cousins to ‘the weak and beggarly elements’ that Paul wrote of six years earlier to the Galatians, especially vv. 8, 20 with their basic principles of the world, which is the same word we find in Gal. 4:8 (*stoikay’ah*, elements or as some translate it, [demonic] spirits). It isn’t God’s Mosaic Law that Paul is warning the Colossians about because Mosaic Law is not a philosophy, nor is it a tradition of man, nor is it considered by anyone to be a basic principle/element/spirit *of the world*, nor does it teach neglect of the body, and it’s certainly not a self-imposed religion. Mosaic Law is God’s very words of wisdom and knowledge on how Israel was to live their lives in covenant with their God, who their God was and the salvation He gave to Israel, all which prefigure and reveal Yeshua.

Just before Israel was to enter into the land of Canaan that God had promised to Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to their descendants, to make it their own land (e.g. Gen. 15:1-21; 17:1-8f.), Moses said:

“Surely I have taught you *statutes and judgments, just as Yahveh my God commanded me*, that you should *act according to them in the land which you go to possess*. Therefore, be careful to observe them, *for this is your wisdom and your understanding* in the sight of the peoples who will hear of *all these statutes*, and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is a wise and understanding people*.’ For what great nation is there that has *God so near to it*, as Yahveh our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such *statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this Law*, which I set before you this day?” (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)

Paul is not coming *against* Sabbaths and New Moons, etc., in Col. 2:16, which he literally writes of (unlike the general *days* and *months* in Galatians 4:10), but against the Gnostic Christians who imposed their perverse practices upon God’s holy days and holy ways. The phrase, *weak and beggarly elements*, in Gal. 4:9 reveal that the Apostle isn’t speaking about the *days*, etc., of Mosaic Law in Galatians 4:10 because nowhere in Scripture does he nor anyone else call Mosaic Law (weak and) beggarly elements.

F. F. Bruce tried to make a connection between them, saying that the *elements* were legalistic *principles* controlled by demons in both paganism *and* Mosaic Law keeping, to link Mosaic Law to Gal. 4:9, but as Fung pointed out, it’s hard to see how keeping Mosaic Law was controlled by demons.

Also, Paul writes in Col. 2:23 of ‘*neglect of the body*,’ which speaks of fasting, most likely in relation to the Sabbath and New Moons. When a person fasts for five, ten or more days, he’ll notice that he grows

spiritually stronger and is able to overcome the flesh, but as soon as he begins to eat again, ‘the indulgence of the flesh’ (Col. 2:23), that is to say his carnal nature, raises its ugly head, and Paul calls it useless to think that our *carnal nature* can be changed by fasting or neglect of the body—only a new heart transplant from Above can do that, which is one of the gifts and treasures of the New Testament (Ezk. 36:24-27). God emphatically states that in the New Covenant (Testament) He will write Mosaic Law (literally Torah in Hebrew; Jer. 31:33) upon our New Covenant hearts and minds. The author of Hebrews confirms that twice, by quoting Jeremiah 31:33 in Hebrews 8:10; 10:16.

Fasting subdues the flesh, but it’s not defeated or dead. Only the blood and Spirit of the Messiah can do that. Gnosticism, not Mosaic Law, is what Paul is coming against in both Gal. 4:8-11, with its *elements, days* and *months*, etc., and in Col. 2:16 when the Gnostics tried to condemn the Colossian Christians for not following their teachings in how to keep the New Moons and Sabbaths, etc., of Mosaic Law. Paul warned the Colossians not to let anyone put them in subjugation to Gnostic ways of keeping God’s holy days, etc.

Although some Christians align *Do not touch, taste*, etc. (Col. 2:21) with Mosaic Law, Paul speaks of the ‘basic principles of the world...according to *the commandments and doctrines of men*. This is not Mosaic Law, but Gnosticism, the theme of Colossians Two (cf. 1st Corinthians 7:19 where Paul speaks of keeping the commandments of God [i.e. Mosaic Law], as the thing that really matters for a Christian).⁷²

⁷² This article was revised on Saturday, September 25, 2021.