

Commentary — From the Margins

The Law of Moses

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But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:1–5)

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1.

What is the Law of Moses? What was it that former Pharisees wanted taught when they said that Gentile converts should be ordered “to keep the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5)?

Jesus used the expression: “If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man’s whole body well” (John 7:23). It would seem that circumcision as part of the Law of Moses supersedes the Sabbath in importance, making the covenant of which circumcision is the ratifying sign of greater importance than the Ten Commandments, with the Sabbath commandment pertaining to entering into God’s rest.

- Circumcision as part of the Law of Moses chronologically precedes being able to enter into God’s presence or rest.
- However, when Israel followed Joshua [Iesus — from Acts 7:45] across the Jordan to take possession of “God’s rest,” only a portion of the nation was circumcised.
- The first action of Israel once in God’s rest (from Ps 95:10–11) was to circumcise the entirety of the nation (Josh 5:2–7).

- But Moses entered into God’s rest without crossing the Jordan (Ex 33:14).
- The second Sinai covenant is made with Moses and with Israel (Ex 34:27), and by extension, those who are of Moses enter into God’s rest prior to those who are of Israel, with God’s rest being a euphemistic expression for entering into God’s presence.

All of Israel in Egypt was circumcised: Moses’ parents hid Moses for three months before putting him in the reed ark where Pharaoh’s daughter found him—and when she found him, she said, “This is one of the Hebrew children” (Ex 2:6), a fact ascertained by his circumcision ... Moses was cast into the Nile as Pharaoh commanded (Ex 1:22), but because his father and mother placed him in an ark made from bulrushes, the reeds used to make paper, Moses lived.

- Every son of disobedience who is born again, or born of spirit in this world enters into the Ark of the Covenant and thereby lives spiritually as Moses lived physically.
- It has been, since the days of Moses, the Lord’s intention to make a great nation from Moses (Num 14:12 et al).
- Jesus said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:46–47).

Moses’ writings come to endtime sons of disobedience on paper pages after the type of the infant Moses coming to the daughter of Pharaoh in an ark of reeds. Those endtime sons of disobedience who find Moses and value him will now believe the words of Jesus whereas those who will not hear Moses (as Pharaoh’s daughter heard the baby crying) will not be convinced of anything by one who has risen from the dead (Luke 16:31), that one being Jesus of Nazareth.

Circumcision, which comes from the patriarch Abraham, heals part of a man—which part? But believing Moses’ writings as the prerequisite to hearing the words of Jesus heals the whole person; for those Israelites who hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him pass from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24).

As Jesus noted, circumcision wasn’t from Moses but from the patriarchs, given to Abraham as the sign of the covenant made by God Almighty (El Shaddai) that required of Abraham to walk uprightly before Him, being blameless ... the testimony of the Lord is that “Abraham obeyed my [YHWH’s] voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen 26:5). Abraham walked uprightly before the Lord, and it is the expectation of Abraham’s offspring [seed] that they walk uprightly as heirs according to the promise.

Circumcision makes naked the head from which the seed of an Israelite comes—and once the head is naked, the whole body is naked unless covered by the garment of obedience to God.

The uncovered head of an Israelite forms the type and shadow of the uncovered Head of Christ who covers the Body of Christ with His righteousness; with his obedience, put on daily as if a garment, this garment being theologically called “grace.” Thus, circumcision should heal the “disobedience” into which every person has been consigned (Rom 11:32) since Adam was driven from the Garden of God. But circumcision does not give to the Israelite spiritual life, or even the promise of inheriting life. Circumcision merely places the person in a sanctified relationship with the Lord while placing upon the circumcised person the obligation to walk uprightly and to be blameless before God. It is after walking uprightly that an ancient Israelite received the promise of inheriting eternal life, and it is only by walking uprightly as a man and not shambling along as a beast that a born of spirit Israelite will pass from death to life.

Jesus said not to be surprised when some who have been born of spirit and who have done good are resurrected to life where those born of spirit who have done evil are resurrected to condemnation (John 5:28–29). Jesus also said,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17–20 emphasis)

The scribes and the Pharisees had the law but did not keep it (John 7:19); they were not the ultimate law-keepers. Rather, they were without love, and the work of the law causes Israel to love God and to love neighbor ... if the work of the law is not inscribed on the heart, regardless of whether the person is of the nations (i.e., is a Gentile) or is of Israel, the person will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Rom 2:12–16).

In order for a disciple’s righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees, the disciple must actually love his or her neighbor, as well as love God enough to by faith keep the precepts of the law. While much of Evangelical Christendom professes great love for Jesus, none of Evangelical Christendom loves Jesus enough to walk as He, Jesus, walked—and if a Christian will not walk as Jesus walked, how does this Christian expect to be with Jesus in the kingdom? Such an expectation is delusional.

Jesus was as an observant Jew, not as a Sadducee or a Pharisee or as a member of any other sect, but as One who believed Moses.

## 2.

The covenant of which circumcision is the ratifying sign will have Abraham being the father of a multitude of nations (Gen 17:4–5), not of one nation; whereas in the covenant of faith

(Gen chap 12), the Lord promised Abram, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:2–3).

One great nation or a multitude of nations ... what did the Lord offer Abraham for leaving his adopted country and his kindred and his father’s house (Gen 12:1)? Backing Abram/Abraham, blessing the one who blesses Abraham, cursing the one who dishonors Abraham—Paul writes, “For the promise to Abraham and his offspring [seed] that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law [nomos] but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom 4:13) ... the question is again germane: what law?

The hope of Christendom is the New Covenant.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote,

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law [— Torah] within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (31:31–34)

The Lord will put the Torah within Israel (v. 33) — the Torah isn’t the Ten Commandments or some vague linguistic icon, but the Law of Moses, the first five books of Scripture.

Scripture consisted, in Jesus’ day, of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings: Jesus said not to think that He came to abolish the Law or the Prophets, with the Law in this context being the Torah, which under the New Covenant will be put within each Israelite ... there is no new Torah that goes within Israel when the New Covenant is implemented. There is only one Torah, and the Torah is the Law of Moses. And because the Torah is within Israel, every Israelite will “Know the Lord” and will not need to be taught to Know the Lord by anyone.

Again, Jesus said that unless a person believes the writings of Moses the person will not believe His words; unless the person hears Moses and the Prophets, the person will not be convinced by one who has risen from the dead (John 5:46–47; Luke 16:31). Therefore, to know the Lord; to believe the words of Jesus, a “Christian” needs to believe the writings of Moses. Yet silver Christendom ignores Moses when it isn’t running from Moses, the accuser of every Israelite (John 5:45).

If the seminal promise of the Torah is its placement within the heart and mind of every person

so that from Abraham will come one great nation, then how can Paul write, For the promise to Abraham and his seed that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith, if Paul's referent to "the law" was the Torah, the Law of Moses? Paul would be too easy to dismiss if Paul said that Abraham's righteousness which came by his faith was not part of the Torah—where else was the story of Abraham found when Paul wrote? Except through the Torah, how did Paul know of Abraham or of the covenants of promise made to Abraham?

An auditor assigns meaning to words; words as linguistic icons do not come with meanings neatly wrapped as if sandwiches in a backpack. Rather, since the Tower of Babel where the Lord separated sound or inscribed images (words) from linguistic objects (the bricks used to build the tower), with each family suddenly calling the bricks by an icon unique to the family, words have meant whatever their user wanted them to mean, a reality that causes theologians of all flavors enormous problems but a situation that now requires every believer to exercise faith that whatever it is the person believes is true.

The disciple who reads his or her Bible daily for inspiration, or the person who rejects the Bible as the inspired word of God, believing instead that Scripture is a collection of myths and historical stubs will use the same linguistic icons to support the person's beliefs as will the disciple who contends that keeping the precepts of law is absolutely essential if a disciple is to be one with Christ Jesus. And while communication between any two or three or "many" readers of Scripture can seem to occur, no communication actually occurs for each assigns differing linguistic objects (i.e., meanings) to the icons, making the promise to Abraham and his seed not coming through the law but coming through the Torah, the Law of Moses, which makes no sense to the person who identifies "the law" in Paul's cited statement as "the Law of Moses."

If the law is the Ten Commandments, then the law has nothing to do with circumcision or with the faith Abraham had before aspiration (breath or /ah/) was added to his name, with this aspiration representing the breath of the Lord; i.e., the breath of Yah.

The Sabbath commandment is part of the Ten Commandments, but is a commandment that stands apart from the Ten Commandments (Ex 16:28–30; 34:21). And as a stand-alone commandment delivered with receipt of manna, the Sabbath becomes a representation of Israel entering into the Promised Land prior to Israel's actual entrance. The Psalmist records the Lord saying, "For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, / and they have not known my ways." / Therefore I swore in my wrath, / "They shall not enter my rest" (95:10–11).

The writer of Hebrews says,

For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. / Therefore, while the

promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest,”” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” / Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” / For if Joshua [Jesus] had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. / Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. (3:16–4:11)

As the Lord loathed the circumcised generation that left Egypt for forty years, He has hated those things that the Body of Christ has done for nearly two millennia in the same way that Paul hated the things that his fleshly members did. These two millennia are forty jubilees, with a jubilee year (a year of release) equating for spiritually circumcised Israel to one year for physically circumcised Israel in the wilderness—forty years of release has been as the forty years Israel wandered in the wilderness, released from bondage to Pharaoh.

The generation that left sin under the cover of grace—an uncircumcised generation, spiritual Gentiles all—will perish in the wilderness, unable to enter into God’s rest, typified by Sabbath observance. This generation, with surprisingly few exceptions, will not enter God’s Sabbath rest: it is as if they cannot enter, for having failed to enter when the promise of entering stood they now find themselves under a delusion that precludes their entrance into Sabbath observance.

If silver Christendom cannot enter into Sabbath observance—silver because this form of Christianity comes from the spiritual kings of Persia, who commanded a remnant of Israel to build for these kings a house like the house of God—then the message proclaimed by Christ has not benefited these Christians but has fallen on deaf ears and minds dulled by disobedience. These Christians will not enter into God’s presence, for they neither follow Moses nor do they believe the Lord. Thus, they will spiritually and physically die before the Bridegroom marries the glorified Church.

There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, with the Greek icon — sabbatismos translated as the naming expression, with sabbatismos representing a diminutive Sabbath as in the weekly Sabbath as opposed to the Millennial rest, the 1,000 year long Sabbath rest when the Son of Man reigns over the kingdom of this world. And this passage is not hard to read nor difficult to understand. Only the person in rebellion to God denies that Christians are to keep the Sabbath—but the Sabbath is not the 8th day, the day following when the promise of

entering into God's rest stands (see Num 14:40–42).

### 3.

If the New Covenant were in effect, the Torah would be within every Christian, written on the heart and placed in the mind. The contention of both gold (Catholicism) and silver Christendom is that the New Covenant is in effect even though no evidence is seen of the Torah being within Christians.

But the argument made by “believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees” was that the New Covenant was in effect and that it ““was necessary to circumcise them [Gentile converts] and to order them to keep the law of Moses”” (Acts 15: 5). ... Is the problem here readily apparent to everyone? If the Torah, the law of Moses, is placed within these Gentile converts, why would it be necessary to command them to keep the Law of Moses? It would only be necessary to command Gentile converts to keep the Law of Moses if the Torah was not placed within the person. So by the Pharisee converts' own argument it is evident that the New Covenant is not in effect.

Paul, however, raises the stakes: circumcision of the flesh (as opposed to circumcision of the heart) no longer has any relevance to Israel, and will not have any relevance until after the Son of Man begins His reign over humankind. Paul's argument is that a transition period exists when those Israelites who have been born of spirit dwell in a tent of flesh analogous to Israel dwelling in houses in Egypt, with the tent of flesh having no more spiritual significance than a house in Egypt. It is only the occupant of the tent of flesh, or of the house in Egypt that is of Israel ... now, this does not mean that if the cultural expectation for the tent of flesh is outward circumcision that an infant tent of flesh is not circumcised. After all, immediately after the Jerusalem conference Paul had Timothy circumcised so as not to cause offense (i.e., place a stumbling block) before natural Israelites when Timothy entered a synagogue (Acts 16:3). What it means is that outward circumcision does not make a person a Jew (Rom 2:28–29). What it means is that the New Covenant did not then pertain to tents of flesh, but only to the invisible new creature or self born of the divine breath of God [pneuma Theon].

Returning to pickup a theme that has escaped most of Christendom: the Sinai covenant was a marriage covenant in that the Lord “married” the nation of Israel, with Israel shedding blood by Moses casting blood on the altar, on the Book of the Covenant, and on the people (Ex 24:5–8) as a woman bleeds profusely when her hymen is broken on her wedding bed—and as the husband sheds no blood on the wedding bed, God shed no blood at Sinai. And according to this marriage covenant Israel was to “obey my [YHWH] voice and keep my covenant” (Ex19:5) as a wife is to obey her husband, a concept lost in the democratization of Christianity. But Israel broke its wedding vows while Moses was still atop Sinai (Ex chap 32), and the sons of Levi, ordained for the service of the Lord, slew about three thousand men of Israel—as servants of the Lord, the sons of Levi slew brother, companion, and neighbor, thereby shedding blood as the agents of the Lord, thus ending the covenant made forty days earlier.

But Moses interceded on behalf of Israel, pleading with the Lord that mercy be shown to Israel; so the Lord made a second Sinai covenant “with you [Moses] and with Israel” (Ex 34:27), not with Moses as the mediator of the covenant between the Lord and Israel.

- The second Sinai covenant is made with two entities, (1) Moses, and (2) Israel.
- This second Sinai covenant gives Moses standing before the Lord equal to, or greater than Israel’s standing as the firstborn son of the Lord (Ex 4:22).
- This second covenant resulted in Moses placing a veil over his face so that Israel could not see the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:12–18).

This second Sinai covenant is not ratified by blood but by Moses entering into God’s rest (a euphemistic expression for His presence) that left a shining on Moses’ face (Ex 34:29) as a type and shadow of glorification. Thus, from the giving of this second Sinai covenant, Israel has been cut off from understanding the things of God, for their hearts have been hardened. Only through Moses can Israel come to the Lord, and if Israel truly believed the writings of Moses the nation would have heard/will hear the voice of Jesus.

Every covenant ratified by the shedding of blood is an earthly thing and the shadow of a heavenly covenant ratified by better promises (Heb 9:23). The shining of Moses’ face as a type of the promise of glorification is a better thing than physically being the holy nation of the Lord.

The argument by converted Pharisees that Gentile converts be commanded to keep the Law of Moses disclosed their failure to understand that receipt of the Holy spirit was receipt of a second breath of life, receipt of life that was not of this world, that was of heaven, having come from heaven as Jesus came from heaven ... with the giving of the Holy Spirit, Israel ceased to be a physical nation like other physical nations, all ruled by human kings or princes. Israel became a nation composed entirely of the new creatures born of spirit as sons of God; it returned to being as Israel was when Israel was a nation of twelve tribes ruled by the Lord.

Abraham through his seed, one in number according to Paul, would father one great nation that consists of everyone born of spirit: the man Jesus, receiving spiritual life via receipt of the divine breath of the Father as the first Adam received the breath of life from Elohim [singular in usage], becomes the common ancestor of every son of God initially domiciled in a tent of flesh. One great people come from Christ Jesus as one people has come from the first Adam. But as the one people who came through Adam and through his seed Seth have become many nations, some great, some small, the one people who come from the man Jesus will also become the multitude of nations promised to Abraham when Abraham had aspiration as the representation of receiving the Holy Spirit added to his name, thereby making the visible things of this world [i.e., the nations of this world] the shadow and copy of the invisible things of God.

The multitude of nations that are to come from Abraham are nations that would not have

come from Abram (before aspiration is added to his name), for from Abram comes one nation, a single great nation, not a multitude of nations. This one nation comes through Abram's seed, the man Jesus of Nazareth, according to Paul, thereby making Jesus the last Adam, a concept about which Christendom has heard much and has understood little; for despite what the conspiracy theorists suggest, Jesus left no physical offspring. He fathered no child. From Jesus could come no physical offspring for Abram, but with the inclusion of aspiration in Abram's name, transforming his name to Abraham, a multitude of nations come through the glorified Christ Jesus.

But none of the above can be understood unless the Torah is placed within the person.

Thus, to the few who will enter into God's rest, into His presence, as the seed of Moses who had standing over Israel understanding is given before understanding comes to the children of Israel (the third part of humankind) who will enter into Sabbath observance halfway through the seven endtime years—who will enter after the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all flesh.

One astute reader asked, How can the Church be dead yet Philadelphia be alive? The answer is found in comprehending that Moses is a part of Israel but is separate from Israel, a distinction that Korah and his friends did not understand ... where did Korah misspeak?

Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" (Num 16:1–3)

Is not Korah correct when he said that all of Israel was holy, and that the Lord was among all of Israel? Would Christians not be correct today to say that all of Christianity is the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9), and that the Lord is among all Christians? So where is the problem—

Korah and his friends rebelled against Moses, which is analogous to Christianity rebelling against those disciples who today have the Torah within them ... although a more sophisticated argument awaits development, the Christian Church is today Israel, and within the greater Christian Church are a few disciples who have the laws of God written on hearts and placed in their minds, too few in most places to even form a fellowship beyond two or three gathered in Jesus' name; too few to statistically represent a discernable fraction of the Christian Church.

*Philadelphia* will not represent all of those disciples who have the laws of God written on hearts and minds, but certainly *Philadelphia* represents one of the most, if not the most spiritually visible assembly, with *Philadelphia's* web footprint appearing to be made a much larger fellowship than the association is ... as a person who has raised a Labrador Retriever puppy knows, even when small the puppy leaves large footprints and has large feet into which

the puppy will eventually grow. And so it is with *Philadelphia*.

Our footprint is of a giant.

*Philadelphia* is part of spiritually circumcised Israel but is also separate from Israel as Moses was separate from Israel. Life has been given to *Philadelphia* before life is returned to the Christian Church as Moses entered into God's rest forty years before the children of Israel entered into God's rest; for receipt of this life was/is necessary for the work that *Philadelphia* has to do. And God will spiritually back *Philadelphia* as the Lord backed Moses when Korah challenged Moses' authority. This backing is made visible once the Tribulation begins; until then, those who oppose *Philadelphia* die inwardly without their deaths being visible in this world.

The Pharisee converts had at least as much understanding as anyone within 8th-day Christendom—and they had no spiritual understanding at all. When the Torah is placed within a convert, the convert not only knows the Lord but wants to serve the Lord, doing by faith those things that are pleasing to the Lord, these things including keeping the commandments, all of them. No one has to tell the convert to keep the Sabbath, or to have love for neighbor. No one has to command or compel the convert to walk as Jesus walked; the convert will want to walk no other way. I know, for I write from what has been experienced.

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