

Commentary — From the Margins

Anathema

Part One

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. (Rom 16:17–18)

1.

Within the Sabbatarian Churches of God, theological disagreements in fellowships have historically led to dissenters being *disfellowshipped* (i.e., marked and shunned) to maintain harmony of belief within these fellowships. The scriptural support given for *disfellowshipping* or excommunicating a brother is allegedly found in Matthew, with this author's Jesus saying,

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. (Matt 18:15–19)

But—a question of importance—does a brother sin against you, the generic Christian, if this brother has Christological disagreements with you? Does the brother sin if the presumed brother doesn't really believe, but is, say, from Home Security and attending services to find out what's said in these private meetings? Before there was Homeland Security, FBI informants infiltrated services of the former Worldwide Church of God, going so far as to become baptized members of Herbert Armstrong's ministry, thus playing a cat-and-mouse game of deception with Armstrong's ministers.

Paul wrote in his explicative and corrective epistle to the holy ones at Corinth,

In the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for *there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.* (1 Cor 11:17–19 emphasis added)

If there must be divisions—factions of Believers, each faction holding differing beliefs about a particular doctrine or dogma—then have these divisions formed unintentionally and simply haven't yet been addressed by the fellowship collectively? Or are these divisions to be tolerated within a fellowship for the purpose of heretics and tares self-marking themselves and thus separating themselves from genuine disciples who will want to have little to do with Unbelievers posing as brothers in Christ? And that happened with at least one Department of Defense informant within the Anchorage, Alaska, fellowship of the former Worldwide Church of God (WCG): the person was informally shunned within the fellowship because there was a “wrong spirit” about him. ... An Unbeliever can fake belief and can fool many, even ministers, but an Unbeliever has problems fooling disciples genuinely born of spirit; for a person truly born of spirit and thereby possessing the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) isn't “comfortable” around an Unbeliever and intuitively is always on his or her guard once the genuine son of God acquires spiritual maturity proportional to the mental maturity of human children able to speak in sentences. The son of God will be old enough to understand why he or she is to keep quiet, not placing the priceless knowledge of God that this son acquires before an Unbeliever, the act of speaking more than should be said being metaphorically identified as *casting pearls before swine*.

A house divided cannot stand—and this includes Christian fellowships: a fellowship of members that give personhood to the glory of God and of members that deny personhood to the figurative “breath” of God can assemble together on the Sabbath to share, what? Probably not food for inevitably, members assigning personhood to the glory of God have long since jettisoned so-called Jewish dietary restrictions for they say that all meats were given to Noah as food. And indeed, this was the case:

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ..." (Gen 9:1–4)

But sons of God—the firstborn physical (Ex 4:22) as well as the firstborn spiritual son of God—do not eat what is food for common humanity, but by what they eat demonstrate that they are “holy” as the Lord is holy:

You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them. For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (Lev 11:43–45)

And,

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet 1:14–16 ... this is found in Peter fulfilling his charge to, *Feed My lambs* — John 21:15)

There are white sharks on America's east coast that need to be reminded that they are afraid of humankind, and that they dread encountering swimmers that otherwise appear

as easy meals. ... The “truth” of the first chapters of Genesis cannot be easily verified by observation, especially when these chapters are closely read.

All meats have been given to humanity to be food, but after all meats were given to Israel as food ... the Lord separated Abraham and his descendants from all of humanity, with this separation following a pattern that has Abram first squatting under the oaks of the Amorite Mamre as if Abram were a wild man, a variety of human being selected by God to be propagated as a cultivar [cultivated variety]. Abraham’s sons Ishmael and Isaac in their youth were also being squatters, with Isaac’s sons Esau and Jacob in their youth being squatters, but with the land upon which Abraham squatted being promised to the descendants of Abraham, who when they would receive this land would be a people special to the Lord. And for the biological descendants of Abraham to return to the land of the Amorites when Amorite iniquity was complete (Gen 15:16), these descendants would be a human cultivar twelve generations in the making; for when Abraham’s descendants returned to the land upon which Abraham had squatted, they were to be special; were to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:6).

For Gentiles, all living creatures are food for them. No “Christian” should criticize a physical or spiritual Gentile for the “meat” that the person eats. No Christian should be concerned about what goes into a spiritual Gentile’s mouth; for even if the Christian were to inadvertently eat an unclean meat, the Christian isn’t defiled—so how can a spiritual Gentile be defiled by what he or she eats? Defilement comes from the inside of a Christian, by those things the Christian does and says; by the thoughts of the person even if these thoughts are never vocalized. Therefore, the Christian who lusts for unclean meats—*e.g.*, crab, lobster, shrimp, sturgeon caviar—is defiled by the Christian’s lust even if the Christian never eats any *common* meats.

Matthew’s Jesus told His disciples, “You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:27–28).

No adultery was committed by the flesh of the Israelite male who looks upon the wife of another man and mentally undresses her, but adultery was committed in the mind—and so it is with eating unclean meats. The Israelite who wants to eat lobster but never will because lobster is unclean, transgresses the Law by lusting for what isn’t food for those who are to be holy as God is holy. The person is a spiritual Gentile regardless of whether the person is outwardly circumcised: the person is not circumcised of heart for if the person were, the person would be repulsed by even the prospect of eating common meats. There wouldn’t be any desire to eat—and an Unbeliever trained [coached] on how to pass as a Believer in a fellowship of the Elect will inevitably be “offended” by a common meat at a potluck whereas the Elect will simply ignore the common meat without saying anything about the dish. Unclean meats are really a non-issue: the person circumcised of heart doesn’t eat them because this son of God has no desire to be *common*. Thus, the son of God passes by common meats on a restaurant menu or at a smorgasbord event without considering eating the dish. And if one of the Elect inadvertently eats a common meat dish, the common meat passes out of the person in a defiled state, that of excrement, regardless of whether the person numbered among the Elect ever knows what he or she has eaten. The regular movement of the bowels takes care of the problem.

But, the reality of Christianity is that *Christians* who assign personhood to the glory of God relax and often neglect the Sabbath, thereby making what they eat a small problem.

They will in their neglect of the Sabbath attempt to come before God on the day following the Sabbath—the first day of the week ... with God, every day is the same; for heaven, itself, is a timeless supra-dimension.

Time and the passage of time pertains to the creation, in which mass becomes potential energy that is expressed by gravitational attraction, with the passage of time able to be written as a mathematical function of gravity. The Sabbath is “time” made holy so that the timelessness of heaven can cast a “shadow” of itself onto the mental topography of humanity ...

The preceding needs to be ingested as holy meat—

On the Sabbath, time should seem to stand still (in a positive sense), with work not completed before the beginning of the Sabbath being left to be completed after the end of the Sabbath. This includes the “work” of making a living, but not necessarily the “work” of living as in feeding oneself. So in planting-time and in harvest season, the work of planting or of harvesting stops for the duration of the Sabbath, from sunset to sunset, even though a day of planting or a day of harvesting is seemingly lost.

The timelessness of heaven doesn’t cast its shadow on the day after the Sabbath: *te mia ton Sabbaton — the one [after] the Sabbath*.

To comprehend the Sabbath as the shadow of timeless heaven, humanity has to look at physical shadows and physical light ... look at your own shadow: it has definition by the presence of light beyond the parameters of your shadow, and by the absence of light through you, generic Christian, physically blocking light from any physical source. Your shadow will always be visible when a source of light is visible. It doesn’t matter that the sun passes over the mountain leaving the entirety of the valley in shadow. Your shadow doesn’t become the shadow that the mountain casts; your shadow simply disappears until the sun returns and you again cast your shadow on the ground. And the same pertains to the Sabbath as the shadow of the timelessness of the heavenly realm.

The Sabbath exists when God, as light, “shines” upon humanity, His glory manifested in the face of Moses. Thus, the Sabbath as the shadow of the timeless heavenly realm didn’t exist when Death reigned over humanity from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14); for Death represents darkness, night, the shadow that spread down the mountainside and across the valley, eventually filling the valley with first dusk, then darkness.

The Sabbath came into existence so that “heaven” could be seen in shadow and type for as long Israel and the children of Israel made a pretense of obeying the Lord, who though Moses told the children of Israel: “But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year” (Deut 11:11–12).

The Promised Land that the children of Israel entered when they crossed the Jordan serves as a shadow and type of the Millennium, which in turn forms the shadow and type of the timeless heavenly realm. Therefore, the logic of the author of Hebrews is understandable:

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 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 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. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Heb 3:7–4:13)

No explanation is needed: Israel as the Lord's firstborn son (again, Ex 4:22) was given the Sabbath for the mind and heart of this selected cultivar just as the land of the Amorites and Canaanites—the Promised Land—was given to the descendants of Abraham for their physical bodies as the physical shadow of the Millennium, a shadow and type of heaven [presumably, heaven here on earth] that comes when the Son of Man reigns over the mental topography of humanity. Thus, the Sabbath as the mental shadow and type of heaven has as much bearing on the mental state of circumcised of heart Israel as it should have had on the mental state of circumcised in the flesh Israel ... when I first learned that Christians were to fast on *Yom Kipporim* [Day of Coverings, plural, for Christ covers sins both here on earth—the coat sacrificed on the altar—as well as in the heavenly realm, the *Azazel*], I was also told by a rabbinical Jew about turning around quickly in the shower with mouth open to “accidentally” get a sip of water on this day of fasting ... if an Israelite doesn't want to fast on *Yom Kipporim*, then don't fast. Don't make fasting into a game that cannot be won. Either fast because you, as a spiritual Israelite, believe that you ought to fast, or forget about fasting. Be then as a Roman Catholic is when he or she fasts. Be as

an Islamist is when he or she fasts. For God doesn't pay attention to "fasts" that aren't mentally fasts, the mind exercising dominion over the flesh, thereby denying to the flesh food and drink of any kind for a 24-hour period as a symbolic type [shadow] of sons of God not needing to eat or drink in heaven.

In shadow, *Yom Kipporim* represents the entirety of the spring harvest of God, with *afflicting the soul* for one day serving as a symbol for *eating the bread of affliction* for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which in turn serves as symbol for the Second Passover liberation of a second Israel followed by the seven endtime years of tribulation. Therefore, *Yom Kipporim* in type represents "shock" to the human system analogous to the seven endtime years of tribulation shocking human culture collectively.

Again, if a person doesn't willingly fast—no consumption of food or drink for a day—assuming there are no medical reasons for not fasting, then the person is not of Israel regardless of whether the person is or isn't outwardly circumcised.

Returning to the Hebrews citation: what day is <today> when there remains a Sabbath rest [*sabbatismos* — "little Sabbath" when compared to heaven and resting from completing the creation on the sixth day] for the people of God? And where does this language originate?

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you hear His voice,

Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
When your fathers put Me [note changed narrator] to the test
And put Me to the proof, though they had seen My work.
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." (Ps 95:7–11 emphasis added)

In this citation, indented lines are the spiritual portion of thought-couplets made with the preceding line, with the change in narrators from David to the Lord representing David serving as a shadow and type of the Lord as the visible physical things of this world reveal and precede the invisible things of God (*cf.* Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 15:46) ... it is David who says, *Today if you hear His voice*, with the reality of what David says not looking backwards at a historical event—Israel's rebellion in the wilderness of Paran—which would be casting a shadow in the wrong direction, but looking forward toward a new Israel hearing the voice and word of Christ Jesus at the end of the age. This will now have <My rest> representing heaven, not the physical Promised Land that the children of Israel entered.

Again, returning to Hebrews: *exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin* (Heb 3:13) ... every day or any day can be called "today," not a concept difficult to understand. For whatever day that it is, the day is when living in the moment, *today*. But the passage suggests—and

actually says—that the promise of entering into God’s rest will come to a close, and *today* will cease being the *today* of the Psalmist.

For Israel in the wilderness, *today* passed into being yesterday when the people of Israel rebelled against Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb.

And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them." Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of [YHWH] appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel. And [YHWH] said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." ...

How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumblings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, 'As I live, ... what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.' I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die." And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land—the men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before [YHWH]. Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive. When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the Lord has promised, for we have sinned."

But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the Lord, when that will not succeed? Do not go up, for the Lord is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the Lord, the Lord will not be with you." But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of [YHWH] nor Moses departed out of the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah. (Num 14:2–12, 27–42)

The men of Israel numbered in the census of the second year (Num chap 1), except for Joshua and Caleb, perished in the wilderness as a “sign” and symbol for endtime Christians that they should not desire evil (1 Cor 10:6–11). But the symbol of Israel’s rebellion against God in the manner of ten [of twelve] witnesses who had gone ahead into the Promise Land bringing back to Israel an evil report about the land representing the Sabbath—about the Sabbath itself, and keeping the Sabbath—will pass unrecognized throughout greater Christendom; therefore, 220 days into the seven endtime years of tribulation, greater Christendom will rebel against God (2 Thess 2:3) and the two witnesses and the Elect as natural Israel in the wilderness rebelled against the God of Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb.

A symbol takes its meaning from its context: the Sabbath as a symbol serves as the shadow of heaven when the eyes of God are on Israel continuously. When the eyes of God are not on a people, the people are in darkness and in darkness, the Sabbath cannot be seen ... greater Christendom is presently in darkness and cannot see the Sabbath as a defining symbol of heaven. Sobeit.

Again, the context for the Sabbath being a symbol of heaven is the eyes of God being continuously upon His sons, today the Elect, not all of greater Christianity.

I will return to the initial questions asked about dissent in the second part of this Commentary.

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